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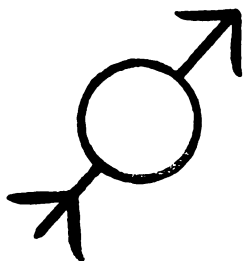
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THE MAKING OF MANHOOD

"The history of a man is his character."

—GOETHE.

*"In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old;
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held."*

—WORDSWORTH.

THE
MAKING OF MANHOOD

BY
W. J. DAWSON



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THE DUTY OF RIGHT THINKING

THE DUTY OF RIGHT THINKING.

ST. PAUL, in a well-known and memorable passage, lays down the rule that if there be such a thing as virtue, it is our duty to think of all that makes for virtue; and not merely to think, in our loose and general use of the term, but to *fix our thought* on such things as are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. The control of our thought is our great prerogative. We *are* what we think, and unless we think of noble things we shall not be noble, and unless we have the high thought we cannot live the high life.

This is so plain and simple a truth that one might suppose that most people would admit it to be self-evident. On the contrary, most people forget it or resent it. The reason for this is clear. They cling to the notion of a magical God and a magical religion, instead of a God and a religion which are reasonable. They expect to be saved by some process of benevolent necromancy, whereas salvation is an intelligent process, devised by a reasonable God for reasonable men. Ask how the brier is changed into the rose, or the wolfish creature of the woods into the dog that is the friend of man, or the crab-

apple into the rounded fruit in which the sweetness and sunlight of the summer is stored up? Ask how the savage becomes civilized, and how the Vandal, who would light his fire with the cartoons of Raphael, is transformed into the intelligent creature who loves art, and knows that true art is beyond price, as the most enduring monument of the thoughts of man? Clearly by no instantaneous process, by no magician's spell. Vital changes are always slow. Centuries pass before the lava stream becomes a vineyard, and the reef of slowly fashioned coral a palm-clad island. You cannot hurry such processes by the fraction of an instant. The thing is to begin them, to put things on the right track, so that the new forces may produce the new life. And the same law applies in the making of character. The lovely, the just, the pure, the true thing—no, the carnal man does not love these things. He cares nothing for them, and is often hostile to them. He has undergone no process of spiritual civilization. How will you change him? By setting him to think on these things. Let him turn his mind toward these things, and fix it upon them, and the law of environment will do the rest. Take your flower which is dwarfed and impoverished from the cold north side of the garden to the south, and turn it toward the sun; when it looks toward the sun, the sun will pour itself into its heart, and every petal will respond with a new beauty. We are what our intention is; our life is what our dominant thought is. Tell me what your daily, habitual, and

unconscious thought is, and I will tell you what your life is. If you will fix your thoughts on things that are true and just, you will become true and just ; this is the controlling law of the science of character, which, like all other sciences, is not magical, but profoundly reasonable.

In some realms of observation we all admit the truth of this doctrine. Do you remember how Wordsworth speaks of "beauty, born of murmuring sound," that had passed into the face of the cottage-girl he painted? Is that a poet's fancy, or does it convey an essential truth? Do those who live amid the flow of streams, and fragrance of woods and fields, really absorb into themselves something of the loveliness they look upon? Unquestionably they do. To dwell amid strife and clangour is to be attuned to them; to dwell amid calm and beauty is to be saturated with their fine essences. Why did Tennyson seek remote solitudes for his abode? Because it was only in fruitful silence, only in the contemplation of calm and lovely things, that his calm and lovely verse could grow into immortal beauty. Think upon beauty then, live with it, love it, and fix your mind upon it, and beauty will leaven your whole mind and nature into the image of itself. Think only of the mean, the sordid, and the ugly aspects of life, and your soul will become like what it contemplates. That is the inevitable law. It is the truth which Shakespeare teaches in his pathetic image of "the dyer's hand subdued to what it works in"; it is the truth St.

Paul indicates when he says, whatsoever things are pure and lovely, think on these things.

"Where are the old calm faces we used to see?" asks a great French writer. "Now," says she, "we see only a dull restlessness, a restless dulness." Who has not felt the truth of that saying? How rare is it now to see those faces that have the stillness as of hushed water in them, "the exquisite eyes of silent blessedness," the luminous beauty of a great peace! Where are such faces? The reply is, that the calm faces have gone because the calm life is gone.

We live in the throes of an intensely energetic age. We boast that we live fast, think fast, and travel fast, and that the telegraph and the press have indefinitely multiplied our sensations. If our faces are eager and anxious, we do but reflect our environment. It was said of John Keats that his face was the face of one who had looked upon a glorious vision: in other words he had fixed his inward eye on beauty. You cannot have the face of the dreamer without the dream, the quiet eyes of the saint without the discipline of the saint. Do not ask magical and impossible things; be reasonable. Figs do not grow on thistles, nor grapes on thorns. This universal law governs everything, and to have the calm brow you must have the calm soul, and if you think on pure things you will be pure.

We admit the truth in relation to physical environment. Some men do not care what sort of place they live in. It is all one to them so long as it has

four walls, a bed, and a dining-table. Colour has no charm for them, art no existence, books no meaning. There are other men who understand that man liveth not by bread alone—even in the home. Humble as it may be, yet there is a touch of taste about it, a charm, a grace, by which we know that a mind lives there as well as a body. One of the most extraordinary things about that extraordinary country called Japan, is that there is the touch of art on all that leaves the hand of the Japanese artificer. The commonest household utensil has a leaf, a spray of flowers, a rude but artistic mingling of lines upon it. It was so once with our English handicrafts. Why is it that the old is so much better than the new, that the beaten iron or carved wood of centuries ago has a grace of design in it that to-day we can but feebly copy? It is because the handicraftsman of those days had set his mind on artistic things. Why is it the Japanese bronze or lacquer has a grace and finish which put to shame the wares of Birmingham? Because for ages the Japanese artificer has set his mind on the things that were lovely. What is meant by that strange saying that the artificers of the ancient Hebrew temple did their work by the inspiration of God, so that the brazen pots of the priests and the carved work of the cornices alike testified to the ideal of beauty? It means that God emphasizes the law of environment, and would have His people worship in a beautiful environment, that the spirit of beauty may help them to attain to the spirit of

reverent worship. The home of order breeds the child of order ; the home of slovenly neglect breeds the sloven. Our ideals govern us ; and what we think, we are ; what we most think of, we most resemble.

Many men think it a sufficient apology for stupidity if they say, " Ah, but I have no ear for music, no love of books, no taste for pictures ! " Why not ? The child loves all three. There is not a child in all the land who cannot be taught to sing, to love books, to be pleased with art. But what such a confession really means is that such a man has not these tastes because he has never thought it worth his while to cultivate them. No ear for music ! No, but he had it once. No desire for books ! But he might have had. The man has simply never thought on these things ; he has been too busy hustling his way in the crowd to gain a little higher social niche ; he has had a stomach for gluttony, and an eye for horse-racing, and a taste for sporting papers, and these tastes have grown fast enough because he has fixed his thought upon them. What he says is literally, tragically true enough : he has no ear for music ; it is as though he had lost the sense, which indeed is very possible, since our senses grow by cultivation and perish by misuse or neglect. It is said that the trained violinist can distinguish a score of notes inaudible to the unpractised ear ; and every one knows the familiar natural fact that the fish which leaves the warm clear waters of the sea for some dark cavern, loses the

power of sight. Nature takes away the unused gift, but multiplies the used and nurtured power. Our destitution of gift is merely the confession of our heedlessness of it. And therefore the question which pierces to the very core of life and character is, What do you set your thoughts upon, and think about most? Take the trouble to sum up your thoughts at the end of a day, and ask to what goal have they travelled? If you never think of Christ, how can you be Christlike? If you think of money fifty times for the once you think of God, what image is your soul likely to bear? Be honest enough to face that searching query; for as you think, so you are.

The wakening of a thought in a man is often the new creation of the man. For example, there is a youth yonder, who seems dull and heavy, but there is a little fibre in his mind which responds to the fascination of the historic past. He thinks about the past, dreams of it, and reconstructs it in his waking dreams. He marches as an officer with a regiment of rustic militia, but he dreams of Cæsar and the Rubicon, and hears behind the clumsy movements of his corps the iron tramp of Roman legions. One day he finds himself in the Coliseum at Rome, and hears the barefooted friars singing vespers in the evening stillness, beneath the broken arches of a lost magnificence. In that hour Gibbon found his life-work. He had fixed his thought for years on the splendid story of Rome, and his thought led him to the Coliseum; and in the Coliseum, on that memor-

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able evening, he found the toil and purpose of his life.

There is a dark-eyed, imaginative child in a quiet Lincolnshire rectory yonder. His father is steeped in the love of mediævalism. When the child plays, it is at mock tournaments of Arthur and his knights. One day he has a slate put in his hand, and is told to write verses. In after years he was to write the *Idylls of the King*, for his name was Tennyson. Trace back such lives as these, and you will find that all their secret lies in one compelling thought. Analyze any great and memorable life: its motor-power is always the compelling thought that made and coloured all. Tell me what is your master-thought, and tell me truly, and I can predict your future.

In the hours of crisis, when life is most severely tested, it will be saved or ruined by its master-thought. There was once a man who used to live in Bunhill Fields, and if you had seen him it is very likely you would not have thought much of him. On sunny afternoons he used to come out in his threadbare grey coat, and sit beside his door, and enjoy the light he could not see, for he was blind. There was an evil and brilliant Court in London in those days, and the Court knew all about this man, and he knew all about the Court. A messenger from this Court came one day to this blind old man, with proposals—seductive financial proposals. I can picture what that messenger saw: a low-ceiled room, an

old oaken table, an organ at one end of the room, and books everywhere, for the old man had for long years set his mind on books and music. When that oily-tongued ambassador of an impure king saw these things, he soon beat a retreat. It was a strange atmosphere to him : it hurt him to breathe it. What could wealth, even if it were earned honestly, give this poor blind old man? He had God, he had the illimitable heavens, and he had thoughts that soared as high as the highest heaven. In that dingy room he could hear night and day "the sevenfold hallelujahs and harping symphonies," as he called them, of all the angels, and in the darkness God moved near him, the darkness and the light being both alike to him. Look at him, that blind, calm face, that majestic brow, and you see a man who had made his environment, you see John Milton. He had learned that the mind is its own place, and for a lifetime had thought on the things that were lovely, pure, and of good report. And so the loveliness was with him still in that poor room, where he sat fashioning the "great cathedral music" of the "Paradise Lost." His thoughts had been lofty, and his life was lofty too ; and he could say proudly, as he went out into the final shadows, "I am not one of those who has disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct, nor the maxims of the freeman by the actions of the slave ; but by the grace of God, I have kept my life unsullied."

Therefore I want to make urgent on all who may

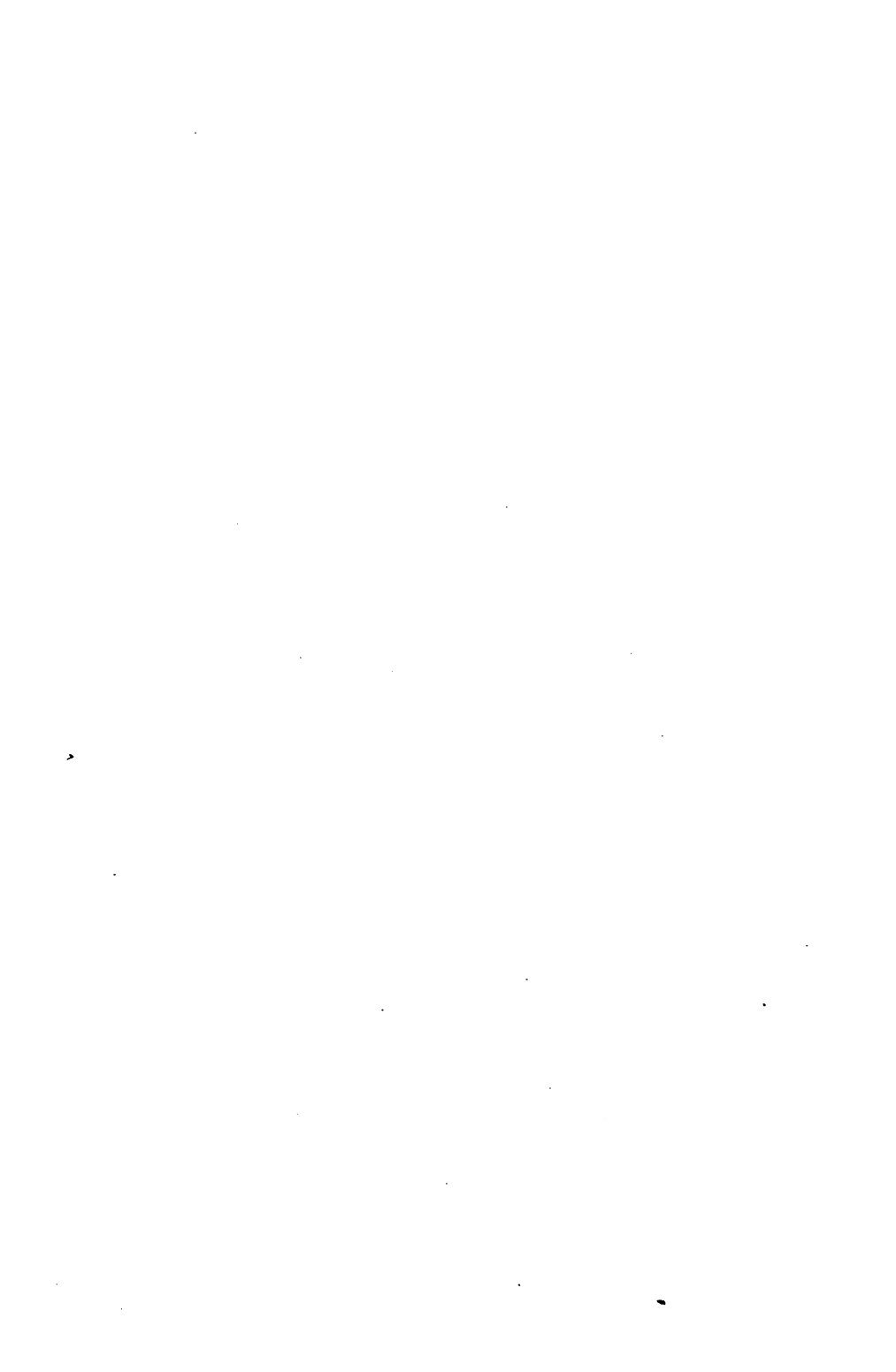
read these words the duty of right thinking. Men are fond of saying, "It does not much matter what a man thinks or believes, if his life be right." True ; but the life never can or will be right, unless the spirit of the thought is right. The reason why creeds are useless, is that men do not believe them : they only say that they believe them, or believe that they believe them. But when a man thinks his creed, when it does really sum up the spirit of his highest thought and conviction, it is worth everything, because it fashions and controls his life. Not matter what a man thinks ! Pray, where do lust, and lying, and murder come from, but the thought ? It was a ghastly and tragic fancy of De Quincey's—that on the palimpsest of every brain, every thought of a man was recorded in invisible hieroglyphics ; and that when it was said the books would be opened at the last judgment, it simply meant that all these invisible records would then spring to light ; and that graven indelibly on the tablets of every man's brain would be the accurate and indisputable facts of his life. How terrible the suggestion ! What impure, and angry, and hateful thoughts, even with the best of us, have soiled that sensitive texture of memory, and saturated it with iniquity ! Not matter what a man thinks ? What if I could present you with these palimpsest writings of some one next door to you in business, and show you that they were the records only of fraud, and lying, and cheating ; would you trust such a man ? If I could show you that the brain of some man who

seeks your friendship is stained through and through with lascivious memories and profligate desires, would you welcome him ? I say it matters everything what a man thinks. If a man's thought is not clean, his life will not be clean ; if a man's thought is pure and high, I will love and trust that man, for I know his life will be worthy.

O youth! you with the quick imagination, you with the warm blood within your veins, who so readily give the mind up to the throng of evil fancies that pollute it, who so eagerly follow the clue that sets the imagination rioting with desires that shame and trouble you on reflection, do not hold it a light matter that you only *think* these things. Do not suppose it any fit apology for corrupt thoughts that hitherto these thoughts have not been incarnated in deeds. You are tampering with the mainspring of morality. It would be as wise and reasonable to say that it does not matter which way the rudder swings as long as the ship moves, as to say that it does not matter what a man thinks. If you would be pure, master your thoughts and fix them on purity. If you would live a high life, you must begin by encouraging the growth of high thoughts. If you would voyage Godward, you must see to it that the rudder of thought is right. God will not save you by magic : there is no magic to save the rudderless ship. God is a reasonable God, who saves us by reasonable means. God sets us conditions, but leaves us to fulfil them ; and if the ideal life that God commands us is

not ours, it is because the conditions He has given us are unfulfilled. All change in life begins with change of thought, of aim, of intention ; and hence the duty of right thinking as the primary condition of all right living. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, fix the mind on these things.

THE POWER OF THE IDEAL



THE POWER OF THE IDEAL.

THE ideal stands for the power of vision, and the life of a man is shaped and coloured by his visions. What is vision? It may be described as the union of a faculty with an opportunity. The ear alone cannot hear: it needs the opportunity of sound. The eye alone cannot see: it needs the ministry of light. "The inlet of the human eye," it has been said, "is one of the smallest of openings. The sun is the largest mass in our system of worlds; yet so good is the adjustment between the two, that through an opening that a pin's head could not enter there comes in upon us almost everything that can be called scientific knowledge." The power of vision means, therefore, the right adjustment of faculty and opportunity; the eye turned to the light, the light waiting for the eye.

Now, youth is the period of vision, the time in which the heart is moved most passionately by the ideal. In the clear light of life's early days we see with a certain piercing distinctness, because the faculty of vision is fresh in us. The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts, says Longfellow; and what he means is that in the first freshness of youth

the eye of the spirit sweeps wide horizons. Almost every great movement in the history of the world has been the work of youth, simply because youth is the time of vision—vision which sweeps the fields of art, of literature, of social life and politics with the searching scrutiny of an unsullied sincerity. What gives youth its power, and possesses it of its immeasurable opportunity, is that there is a noble inconsiderateness in its temper, which brings vision and action into more direct relation than usually happens in later life. For youth to see is to act, to believe is to affirm, to know is to do. And what works ruin in human life is to see without acting, to believe without doing. For what happens then? Then the power of vision fades, and life sinks into dulness, obtuse indifference, soul-darkening insincerity. The one key to any noble life is to see clearly, and then to act in absolute obedience to the highest vision. The visions of youth then become the dreams and consolations of age. Age, when it comes, is not regret, not cynicism and pessimism and despair of progress, but a period of calm and tempered hopefulness, made bright with dreams of that vast future over which the grave can cast no shadow.

It follows that the measure of a man is the measure of his vision. Man is pre-eminently the creature who sees. Other creatures can look in stolid silence on the stars, but no other can watch them with intelligent curiosity and read their secret. Other eyes than ours watch the round of earth and sky, but no other

can perceive what we see, and read the miracle of the flower, the wonder of the light. Who is he whom men have always delighted to honour before his fellows? It is the prophet, the poet, the seer—the man whose vision pierces farthest. What is it that poets have said of man when they would best describe and honour him? It is that he is an onward-looking creature, bearing fore-knowledge of death and eternity written on his brow.

He looks before and after,
And sighs for what is not :

he is, amid the dead waste of Nature, what Wordsworth has magnificently called him—

Thou Eye amongst the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal Deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind.

And what are the visions or ideals by which men live? They are four : the vision of the mind, which is progress ; of the moral nature, which is duty ; of the heart, which is love ; of the soul, which is faith. It is by these visions that men live ; we live by admiration, hope, and love. To lose these visions is to fall into outer darkness. To keep them fresh and undimmed through youth and manhood is to live nobly, to sustain life in harmonious unity, and round it off with divine completion.

The first vision which youth should covet is the vision of progress. The worst of all apostacies is disbelief in progress. Yet there are times when it is difficult to believe in it, and there are many causes

to stimulate our misgivings. The merest glance at history convinces us that time moves in cycles: we see dynasties and movements wearing themselves out, forms of thought and methods of life exhausting themselves; the Reformation summing up one period, the French Revolution another; the centuries dying like flowers on a stalk, to be succeeded by other flowers of strange bloom and odour, fashioned, perhaps, after a new design, with variations which we cannot foresee. Every newspaper writer of to-day is eager to inform us that we stand at the end of an age. We feel that the nineteenth century is dying, and we wait in silence for the coming of the twentieth. We see it afar, as a dark and clouded dawn lying on the mountains of the future. We are conscious of a strange thrill which runs along the earth heralding its approach, and we ask what new thing will come with this new age. Is the world slowly sinking to its end? Is it true, as we have been told lately, that the expansion of civilization has reached its limit, and that by the end of the twentieth century, China and Africa, by mere force of numbers, will roll a flood of barbarism across the world, and blot out the last vestiges of a social empire which it has taken a thousand years to produce and perfect? This is all that many of our modern prophets can perceive: a clouded dawn upon the heights of time, an ominous and slowly gathering darkness, in which the world will finally sink, ruined, bankrupt, and defeated.

No doubt it seems strange that such questions

should be asked in such a day as ours, and that the races which have accomplished most should thus lose nerve and hesitate before the future. But there is a reason for it, and that reason is the exhaustion which always follows great periods of progress. The tide ebbs as far as it flows, and those who do not know the law of the tides suppose that the ebb is final. Fifty years ago the tide was in full flow, and a breath of passionate hope was passing over all Europe. Italy was feeling her way to deliverance ; America was emerging like a giant from the sea ; the peoples of Europe were entering on the long-delayed heritage of liberty ; Tennyson was writing in his first *Locksley Hall*, rejoicing as he wrote,—

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something
new,

That which they have done but earnest of the things that they
shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

What marvel that men saw visions and dreamed dreams in the days when tyrannous thrones were shaking, and great acts of emancipation were happening ! What wonder that a passionate hope shook the pulses of the world in a period when the railway was making all nations neighbours, and the telegraph was putting a girdle round the globe, and the prophecy of that strong angel who was to stand with one foot on the sea and another on the land, crying, "Time shall be no more," seemed actually fulfilled ! But now all that man imagined, and more than he

had hoped, has been accomplished. Men are tired with the supreme efforts they have made. In many cases the great experiments from which much was expected have seemed to fail. We still have poverty in the midst of wealth, injustice hiding in the shadow of liberty, social wrongs fluttering their leprous rags in the full blaze of civilization. We still have war, and drunkenness, and unbridled lust, and extreme social misery. When men think of these things, and feel them keenly, they become dismayed. They see the clouded dawn upon the mountains, and forget that at least it *is* dawn. They lose the vision of a divinely ordered progress, and then youth is sorrowful, and age is cynical, for the vision of the one has waxed dim, and the dreams of the other have become bitter.

The first great ideal which youth needs to cherish is, then, the ideal of an eternal progress. Do not permit yourself to despair; have faith in the God of your fathers and the God of the ages. The youth who despairs is lost. It was said of a famous French writer, "Discouragement fell upon him very early;" and it was that discouragement which blighted his genius and poisoned his life. Such melancholy as this is, in truth, as Thomas Hardy says, "the melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficent Power." They may well be melancholy who can only perceive the human race as a rabble army, deserted by its captain, wandering, without programme or determined

goal, through innumerable desultory campaigns, that settle nothing, and lead nowhither. And from what does such pessimism arise, save lack of vision? For, without contradiction, it is an assured fact that the greatest men have always been the most hopeful. They have seen, far off, a shining goal, and have been conscious of a real onward movement in society. The murmuring has always come from the ranks, not from the leaders. Pessimism is the disease of the weak, as optimism is the strength of the strong. The crowning and dominant quality of those whom we have recognised as the great captains of humanity has always been a certain valiant hopefulness. Do not, then, permit yourself to be discouraged ; be sure of it, the world moves. Do not listen to the whispered mutiny of the ranks, but rather to the buoyant bugle-call of the leaders. Once it happened to me, when travelling in the Alps, that after climbing a tedious path, hewn out of the precipitous mountain-wall, I came to a dark and narrow opening in the rocks. There was no other way ; here, in this gulf of blackness, the path terminated. There was nothing for it but to enter that narrow rift in the vast limestone wall, and follow the path into the darkness. For ten minutes there was no sign of light ; then, far away, I saw what seemed a star of clouded light ; and it grew and grew, till at last I found that it was the end of the passage, and I stepped out into the blue air, and saw before me an immense array of snow-capped mountains glittering in the sun. So,

for a moment, we may have come to a chasm of gloom, but it leads into the light of a new day. The pale star we see is the star of hope, and the doorway of the dawn. If youth is to serve the world, it must never lose sight of that star of hope. A passionate faith in progress is the first of those great faiths by which the world lives ; and of those who cleave to it, it shall be said—

Beacons of hope ye appear ;
Ye alight in our van ! At your voice
Panic, despair flee away ;
Order, courage return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue the march
On to the bound of the waste,
On to the City of God !

A second necessary vision for youth is the vision of the moral nature, which is duty and righteousness. What is the moral nature ? It is the Divine Ought within us. We know what we ought and ought not to do. We have certain moral instincts which will infallibly guide us toward right if we will follow them. We have, in a word, moral vision, by which we discern right from wrong, good from evil ; and as we follow that vision, duty becomes clear to us ; as we disobey it, the means by which we recognise duty fail us, and life falls into moral ruin.

Let me put a case—a real case—on which, some time ago, I was appealed to for counsel. It is a

typical case of that tragedy of the passions which touches the lives of men and women alike. Here is a woman with a ruined life, but by no fault of hers. She had the misfortune to marry a scoundrel who has deserted her. He may be dead, he may be alive, she cannot tell ; but there is at least some evidence that he lives. If there were any real justice in the laws that touch the marriage relationship, the law would free this wronged woman of the foul brute who has spoiled her life. But the law insists that this man is still her husband ; she is still his wife. And now another and a true love is offered her,—after years of poverty, loneliness, and merciless struggle for bread. She has but to speak the word, and the poverty and loneliness are at an end. It is an intolerable temptation, a hideous problem ; what is to decide it ? There is but one possible reply, hard and bitter as it is : do right at all costs. There is a worse thing than loneliness, poverty, and the loss of love ; there is the loss of self-respect. No sweetness of love or gain of ease can atone for that wrong done to self-reverence. It may be that the entire force of reason presses one way, and the solitary moral instinct another ; but in such an hour it is the moral instinct alone that should command obedience. Faint as we are, sore-tempted, wronged, and injured, yet we have no right to sacrifice the weakest instinct of duty to the strongest pleading of desire. When love and duty close in mortal conflict, it is duty who must be victor, or love will win at the price of the soul.

Of love that never found his earthly close.
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so.

My faith is large as Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

There is no truly wise voice that will not say to the man or woman in the throes of such a conflict as this, Obey the moral instinct; keep to the ideal of duty—the vision seen in the pure days of youth, recognised in the best moments of emotion, felt to be authoritative even in the wildest stress of passion; and out of the darkness shall arise a great light, and in the soul shall spread the secret balm of an infinite divine consolation.

For the young man again and again this temptation will occur, and in many forms. Voices of sophistry without and of casuistry within will urge you to follow inclination rather than duty, and will almost persuade you that what the heart wills is right, and what the conscience commands is wrong. You will find it easy to do wrong, and difficult to do right. You will feel as the strong swimmer feels when spent and faint, that you can resist no longer—that it would be almost heaven to lie and drift, and lift the numbed and aching limbs no more. But woe to you if you yield, for it is death. Fight on in stubborn obedience to right, even when right seems a weapon by which a wrong is wrought upon you, and you will overcome. For to yield is to despise the moral ideal which alone is fitted to govern us, and to escape that

"compulsion to think" which in all ages men have revered by the name of conscience. When men do this, they inevitably find that the power of moral discrimination becomes blunted in them, and the vision which drew them into those pure worlds of thought and feeling that lie far "from the fickle and the frail," withdraws itself. Too late they discover that men cannot feed on the husks of the swine without becoming brothers to the swine; and in the inevitable degradations that follow the lack of vision, the cry is wrung from them, as it was wrung from the dying Paracelsus :—

No, no :

Love, hope, fear, faith, these make humanity ;
These are its sign and note and character,
And these I have lost !

The third great ideal for youth to cherish is the ideal of love, which is the vision of the heart. The dream of pure and noble love is a dream which dwells, or ought to dwell, in the heart of all pure and chivalrous youth ; and I say, cherish it, for there is none that fades so easily. It is one of the commonest temptations of youth to discount this vision with a cheap and shallow cynicism. In the daily press, in the smart paragraphs of a libertine journalism, in the undisguised cynicism which disfigures scores of novels, which win attention by their immodesty, love is derided, is cheapened, is coarsened by vulgarity, till the youth who reads wonders whether such a thing as pure and chivalrous love does exist at all to-day, or

whether it ever moved in heavenly radiance across the world. Yes, it is in the world still, but it can only be found by the pure in heart. It does not visit, and will never be discovered by, the youth who has cast away his purity, his modesty, his reverence for women, his respect for himself. There have been men who have grown old, and yet have never ceased to see this vision of a perfect love, nor to know that it was the greatest and best thing in the world. They have never tired of it, never been deceived by it, never been satiated. It has kept its radiance to the last and its freshness has not faded, nor its fine gold become dim. But these were the men who followed the vision in their youth, and believed in it, and never sinned against it. Read such a life as Charles Kingsley's; measure the tenderness and depth of that chivalrous passion which controlled and shaped his life; reflect on the pathos of that most touching epitaph which is engraved on the stone beneath which husband and wife lie in Eversley churchyard—" *Amavimus, Amamus, Amamibus*"—and you will recognise what is meant by the ideal of love governing a man's whole life, and fashioning it to a mould of perfect chivalry. Do not listen to the cynicism of shallow hearts and evil minds: to the tainted talk of the man who has darkened his soul with lust, and ruined his moral vision by contempt of light. Keep yourself pure, chivalrous, reverent of love, and for you the world will still contain a Paradise not impossible of conquest; and age, if it be yours, will be consoled

with the vision of a further dawn and realm of love,

Where love, once leal, hath never ceased,
And dear eyes never lose their shine ;
And there shall be a marriage feast,
And Christ Himself shall make the wine.

And to believe in love is really to believe in man. A French thinker has said that there are two ways of living in a world that is full of sorrowful and tragic things: "Your heart must either break or turn to brass." The heart of the cynic turns to brass. He sees all the clay, but never the gold of human nature. For him virtue is an affectation, purity the accident of an accident; generous ideals of love and chivalry, a folly and a self-deception. For him no statesman is honest, no philanthropist unselfish, no prophet less than sordid at heart. And here, again, are we not only too familiar with journals which live by smart sneers and barbed ironies at the expense of every movement which seeks to meliorate the common lot, and every man who seeks to raise the moral standard? Can any one glance over the fugitive literature of the day without a sorrowful sense of degeneration of tone, a certain acrid flavour which comes from lost ideals and darkened visions? And, indeed, in the very nature of things, the press cannot help showing us more of the evil side of life than the good. The wickedness of the world inevitably finds its record in the press: there is no newspaper to record the good deeds of men. Even the wisest of us may be

easily deceived by newspaper reflections of life. We forget that the newspaper skims the scum of life—the crimes and follies of men, the callous brutalities of the police-court, the foul indecencies and monstrous wickedness of abnormal conditions of life,—it does not, and cannot, record the unpraised compassions of the poor for the poor, the silent sacrifices which motherhood makes every hour for children in a million homes, the infinite acts of love by which the world is daily purified and sweetened. The flowers grow everywhere; the stagnant pond, with its foul growth of putrescence, is only found at intervals. Let youth, therefore, seek to keep unimpaired the vision which discerns the best side of humanity. Have faith in man, in his instincts, in his progress, in the slow development of the God-like leaven which is in him, for this is the vision of love; and when men have no faith in one another, the dissolution of society has begun, and anarchy is knocking at the gate.

To lose faith in man is also to lose faith in God. It is a necessary corollary to the cynicism which has lost the vision of righteousness and love that it should think of God, if it thinks at all, as an almighty satirist or cynic, who has framed an ironical Comedy of Errors, called Human Life, and who watches with idle or malign amusement the world which He has made. This iron note of despair has been heard in all ages, and it is heard anew in ours. Does not Heine speak of the "irony of the Almighty," lying heavily upon him? Has not one of the most brilliant

of our modern humorists satirized the order of the world in cynical descriptions of Zeus & Co., and their doings? Does not one of the very greatest works of fiction of our day conclude with the bitter saying that "the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess"? The worst peril of to-day is the cynicism which makes God a cynic, the empty godless badinage which smothers in flippant laughter the most sacred ideas which have moved men and made nations great. It is so easy to be cynical at the expense of a God who does not reply. It seems so like genius and an emancipated mind to contrive jokes against the Eternal that even Renan could not resist the temptation. But this is the common pastime of cynicism, for cynicism is assuredly not so much lack of vision as the incapacity to see anything in its true light, apart from the distortions of a diseased egoism. ✓

The last great vision for youth to cherish is, then, the vision of the soul, which is faith. Faith in what? In God, in Christ, and the spiritual world which lies around this little life. In the dawn of our days, when the vision of the soul is freshest, we see these invisible refuges of the soul as great realities. To the keen and unsophisticated sense of the child, God and Christ, and the spiritual world, are natural thoughts. We hear, as Wordsworth heard, the murmur of the sea that brought us hither; we cry, as Browning cried, in passionate emotion to that

Pale Form, so dimly seen, deep-eyed,

the Christ who moves our souls and calls for our obedient love. There are moments of acute vision when we gain heart-moving glimpses of Christ ; when He steps out of some often-read verse before us in the divine charm of His love ; when some wave of feeling, some word of counsel, some cadence of music, interprets and reveals Him to us for an instant, and our souls go out to Him. And there are hours when the spiritual world becomes almost visible to us, when in prayer we have seemed to find an answering voice, when in silence we have felt the mystery of unseen presences, and our hearts have leaped up in the passion of conscious immortality. Cherish these visions; follow these inherent intuitions of the soul. Faint as they are, they are true, and they will grow stronger as we follow them. Do not be ashamed to pray ; prayer is the divinity which is within a man seeking the divinity which is beyond him. Even when you seem to speak to the unanswering air, go on praying, as Dr. Chalmers tells us he did, and the vision and the reply will come. For the vision of God is the highest of all visions ; and he who " lives as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye " cannot help fashioning his life into a noble and even memorable thing.

The man who sees the sculptor at work upon a block of marble sees what appears to be a purely mechanical performance. But, out of sight in the sculptor's brain, there is a quiet presence we do not perceive ; and every movement of the hand is impelled by that shining thought within the brain.

That presence is the ideal. Without it, he would be a mason ; by it, he becomes an artist. So we are fashioned by our visions, and obey the compulsion of our ideals. The power of the ideal shapes our life each instant ; and only as our ideals are true and beautiful can our lives become virtuous and noble.

THE POWER OF PURPOSE

THE POWER OF PURPOSE.

IF I were called upon to select the most epoch-making moment of the nearly nineteen centuries which lie between us and Calvary, I should choose that moment when an obscure Jew said upon the road to Damascus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Renan has said that when the Jews returned from captivity, the little group as it crossed the desert carried with it the Future, and definitely founded the religion of Humanity. It may be said that Saul of Tarsus, as he entered Damascus that day, carried with him the future of Christianity. For it was his genius, his intensely idealistic and yet practical spirit, his magnificent moral enthusiasm and self-sacrifice that were to do more than any other agencies to secure the dominion and justify the ideals of Christianity. Many forces had already attacked those unscalable fortresses of imperial Paganism and failed: this man was to succeed. The birth of a single strenuous purpose in his heart was destined to transform the entire character of Europe. Such is the force of an idea, such the victory of a purpose. You cannot measure the ultimate horizon of any human purpose, nor forecast the future of any great idea. When a man collects all his powers, and says, "This

one thing I do," he has clothed himself with a force before which Time and Death are impotent.

Now we all can measure the outward triumph of a man's life, but we rarely measure the forces out of which the triumph sprang. Men suddenly emerge into the blaze of fame, and then the world wakes up and wonders how it has all happened. We have a conspicuous instance of all that this means in General Booth. To-day the press of the entire world talks of him, statesmen and great soldiers interview him, Church dignitaries and agnostics alike praise him ; his name is loudly canvassed in circles where a few years ago it bred the facile sneer ; rich men seek his doors with gifts of money, poor men put their hope in him, philanthropists hail him as their captain, and he has been announced on all sides as a new saviour of society. Yet twenty-five years ago this same man was standing bare-headed in the worst slums of Whitechapel, bleeding and mud-stained, penniless and friendless, and for the whole of that period has rarely been treated by the world at large as anything better than a crack-brained fanatic, a mere low sensation-monger and enthusiast. Is it luck which has thus suddenly made him the observed of all observers? There is no such thing as luck in any world over which God presides. What, then, is the secret? It is purpose. The great victories which men praise are always won first of all in a man's own soul. The great men who stamp themselves ineffaceably on the ages are always the men who are capable of conceiv-

ing a purpose clearly, and of following it courageously through evil and good report. You may even sweep aside as relatively trivial all question of the range of their gifts, the scope of their intellectual life. The great force with which you have to reckon is the immense strength and heroic persistency of their purpose. "A great, therefore a surrendered soul," says Emerson ; and the surrendered soul is the purposed soul. These are the dedicated men, the resolved men, the men of one idea, the men who know what they want, and live to get it. It is by their power of purpose that they triumph.

The man who is without purpose is like a ship without rudder or compass or course. Over the foaming waste of the world's wide oceans thousands of ships are passing, but not one without a purpose. Hail them where you will, each can tell you where it is going, what it is doing, why it is afloat. Can you conceive such a thing upon the high seas as a ship whose captain does not know where he is going, who replies to your question of "Whither bound?"—"I don't know ;" who has no care to ascertain in what latitude he sails ; who carries a precious cargo he knows not whither ; who has before him no vision of a harbour, no scheme of commerce or conquest, and who gaily replies to your remonstrance, "Oh, what does it matter ? I go where the winds and currents take me ; it is all one to me, and it will be all the same in the end !" You would call that man a maniac. You would tell him that where the winds take men on

the high seas is to shipwreck and death. You would say, with a throb of horror, "At last I have seen that spectral dream of old-world mariners, a ship of fools, a ship of the dead, an appalling vision, because literally the vision of the doomed." Yet that is a frequent spectacle upon the high seas of life. Men drift out upon the tides of youth, and leave the winds and tides to do what they like with them. They never put before themselves a solemn purpose which is worth living for and worth dying for. When some voice like mine hails them out of the gathering tempest, they reply with scornful laughter, "What need to trouble about chart or compass?" And we hear that tragic laughter still as the darkness hides them away, and the boom of the breakers thunders in our ears. No; the majority of men are lost not because they are criminals, but fools; not because they sought wickedness, but drifted into it; not because they purposed folly, but simply because they never had a wise and enduring purpose.

"What am I going to do with my life?" That is the greatest of all questions for youth. In a few years it will be too late to ask it. Life will have hardened into a mould which you will be unable to break. But you now have something of which you are the sole master. Go, then, and count your wealth. You have physical strength and the faculty of physical joy; a brain that can be the store-house of great thoughts, and the fountain of noble speech; a heart behind the brain which can throb and thrill with the full pulses of

emotion, and can use the brain as a great musician uses a great organ for the expression of his moral and æsthetic passion ; a soul behind all, a vital something, a spark of ethereal fire, a divine inmate, the pulse of all being, the centre of all sentience, the very citadel of the whole man, from which the government of the whole is carried on. You belong to the same order of life as Socrates and Handel, Shakespeare and Darwin. You have at your disposal a certain length of breathing years, in which men have found it possible to establish great empires, write great books, build great cities, and make the whole world familiar with their names. In you reside forces which will flow out into immeasurable issues. Insignificant atom as you may seem against the bulk of the solid world, you are greater than it, for you are its lord. It is you alone of living creatures who can see its beauty, find its wealth, and utilise its hidden stores. You are the sole artist, poet, thinker, searcher, builder, master of this solid world. That is what life means, and what it gives you ; and when we survey all that man has done with his life, and all that he is doing, it becomes for youth the most solemn and thrilling of all human questions, "What am I to do with my life ?"

But splendid as this vision is, too often it is not seen by us until those years of life which are most susceptible to its impulse, most likely to develop the energies that make life glorious, are wholly or partly lost, and then it is a vision of torturing reproach. Partly because youth is the season of hope, partly

because it is the experimental beginning of life, and life looks long enough to admit of indolence, and ample enough to make instant resolution seem needless, the young man rejoicing in his strength refuses to form definite purposes which would shape and ensure his career. Through heedlessness, through mere lightness of heart, through aversion from that which is serious, and indifference to that which is high, he puts off those vital decisions which make character, till at last he awakes to find that a great section of life has slipped away, and the bright new gold of youth is already squandered. He has always meant to do some day that which he ought to have done long ago, and that fanciful "some day" perhaps never dawns. And he finds, moreover, that a man cannot play with himself with impunity. There is no habit that so grows on the soul as irresolution. Before a man knows what he has done, he has gambled his life away, and all because he has never made up his mind what he would do with it. In mere weakness and nervelessness of nature he has let its precious treasure slip through his fingers, till he is bankrupt at an age when, for others, the first rewards of purpose are beginning to appear. He has dreamed, meditated, intended, procrastinated, played with his impulses, till the power of strenuous purpose has almost died in him, and the best you can say of him when his life closes, is what was once written over the grave of a certain foolish prince, "Here lies a man of the best intentions."

I could paint a whole portrait gallery of men of this order whom I have known. There was my old college friend, A. He was indolently and capriciously brilliant. When the examinations came on, he used to say, "He had no doubt he should pull through somehow," and that was how he generally did pull through. Life was for him a picnic, a promenade, a delightful series of pleasurable experiences—anything but a battle and a struggle. He could not be persuaded that for practical success in life diligence is needed. He perpetually excited great hopes which were not fulfilled. His friends at last began to say he had general talents for everything, and particular talents for nothing. Slow men passed him, dull men took the prizes over his head. But he went on his way, *insouciant*, careless, unpractical, calling himself a child of genius, and forgetting that genius without painstaking is as gold that is not minted, and therefore without current value. To-day you will find him mixing medicines for the famous physician who was once the dull boy he despised, or copying briefs for the brilliant lawyer who was once the butt of his facile ridicule; and the tragedy of A.'s life is that he never recognised the power of purpose.

There was B., who was of that eager class of minds which are always fascinated with novelty, and therefore always in the throes of change. He wanted to be many things, and at last was—nothing. He might have been a fair poet, for he could write good verses; an orator, for he could speak with grace and fire; a

journalist, for he could dash off a capital article. But his fire soon went out, because he was too careless to feed it. He once took up social work for the poor, but a winter was enough for him. He once began to study divinity, but a session tired him out. He once took eagerly to science, but that was because it was a brilliant plaything in the hands of a lecturer he had heard, and when he had to drudge at its terms and elements, he gave it up. He was always giving things up. He gave up his native country about six years ago, and the last I heard of him was that he was setting type in a New Zealand printing-office. He is still a little poet, a little writer, a little orator (mainly at drinking bars), and that is why New Zealand has put him to set type in a printing-office, and why colonial editors drop his MSS. with surprising unanimity into the waste-paper basket. The failure of his life was lack of concentration : he never learned to say, "This *one* thing I do."

There was C.—he too might have done well, but he never measured the force of habit. He had never found out that it was one of the tendencies of human nature to do twice that which it has done once. He got entangled early in the mesh of evil habits. Again and again his friends urged him to form a purpose and to stick to it, and so he did, while they propped him up. When they ceased to coerce him, he collapsed. His life was frittered away. Bit by bit it was eaten into by the canker of degrading habit, till it crumbled into utter ruin, and he became a shame

and trouble to all who knew him. He drifted gradually out of sight, and the darkness covered him. Where he is to-day no one knows. Probably there is a pauper-grave in some obscure cemetery somewhere, and that is where he lies.

The list might be multiplied indefinitely. It is but a little section of life which any man sees, and yet out of that which I have known I could produce record after record, written within and without with mourning and tears and lamentation. I could take you to grim hovel and leprous lair, where the wrecks of humanity lie huddled in promiscuous shame, and as each ghastly head is lifted up, and each wasted lip speaks, the same lesson would be taught of the tragedy which lack of purpose creates. If you do not know what you are going to do with your life, the devil will soon teach you to do evil with it. You need not choose evil ; you have only to fail to choose good, and you will *drift* fast enough towards evil. You do not need to say "I will be bad" ; you have only to say, "I will not choose God's choice," and the choice of evil is already settled. Fail to have a commanding purpose in your life, to which all faculty and aspiration lend themselves, and already you have become the victim of inferior purposes, whose steady tide will suck you down into the maelstroms of indolence and shame and ruin.

I almost think that if I were asked to indicate the worst curse of life, because the most frequent, I should reply—*Desultoriness*. What is it to be desultory ?

It includes procrastination, irresolution, lack of aim. We do not know what we want, we have no settled plan how to live, we have no central purpose which makes the governing force of life. The immense defeat that came upon France in the Franco-German War was entirely due to lack of programme. Great armies were sent into the field without the slightest plan of campaign to guide them. They were marched hither and thither in obedience to contradictory orders: they marched in circles, going out with the full belief that the enemy was near one day, and retreating again the next day without having seen a single German helmet. Indecision ruled the councils, and mutiny spread among the men. In the meantime the Germans knew exactly what they wanted and how to do it. The problem had been worked out to a nicety in the study of Von Moltke. Their armies had the coherence and momentum of a wedge of iron being slowly driven home by an irresistible force. And as it was on those tragic battlefields where France was broken, so it is in life. The life that conquers is the life that moves with a steady resolution and persistence toward a predetermined goal. The men who succeed are they who have thoroughly learned the immense importance of plan in life, and the tragic brevity of time. "Never be unemployed, and never be triflingly employed," was one of John Wesley's wise rules for his helpers. He himself was a model of method. He wrote a library, conducted a vast correspondence, read everything worth reading in current

and ancient literature, beside governing a great body of followers, and preaching often a dozen times a week at towns lying far apart from each other—in the days, too, when all travelling had to be accomplished on horseback or by chaise. When we reflect upon it, we are amazed ; but the one secret is that Wesley had his plan of life, which he carried out with a tireless industry, and he never had a desultory hour. We may be sure of it that the full life is the happy life. If for any of you the time hangs heavy, find something to do at once. Let no day end without its record. Discipline yourself in habits of order, punctuality, and industry. It will be difficult at first to break through other habits that have arisen out of stagnation of interest and lack of aim, but when once you have done it, you will be rewarded by a new sense of pleasure in life, and a still more satisfying sense of not having lived in vain.

Perhaps it may be said that such counsel is all very well for exceptional people, but that circumstances alter cases, circumstances govern cases. Yes, they will, if you will let them do so. But what is circumstance? It is simply the shadow of character. Character makes circumstance, as a man governs his shadow. We are meant to be the architects of circumstance, not its victims. I had an instance of this brought to my knowledge the other day, which affords a fine example of female heroism. A lady of my acquaintance had a child who was deaf and dumb. Many women in such a case would

simply have given themselves over to an incurable sorrow. It would be a terrible blow to any mother to find her child doomed to silence and speechlessness ; but this mother did not succumb to the blow. She made herself acquainted with the new system of instructing deaf mutes by observing the motions of the lips and the expression of the face in uttering words. She put herself under training for two years, that she might thoroughly master the system, and then she began to instruct her little girl. It required intense patience, but she succeeded. And having learned the system, and found it successful, she did more than this. She found three other little deaf mutes, and instructed them at the same time as her own child. I saw this child the other night—a bright, happy girl, who, without being able to hear a word I said, was able to talk to me, and understand what I said to her. I count this little incident as one of the noblest examples of female fortitude and heroism which I have known. Here were a set of circumstances which seemed unchangeable. Many women would have succumbed to them ; most women would have been content to send the poor child to some college or asylum for instruction ; but this woman turned her disaster into a means of blessing others, and has conquered the circumstance that threatened to overwhelm her, by making herself the instructor of others who share the calamity of her child. And instead of a home with a constant shadow in it, and a mother sitting overwhelmed beneath it, you have a

bright, cheerful, energetic woman, who feels she has a mission in life; and a bright, cheerful child, for whom a mother's care has almost banished the consciousness of her affliction. Circumstance brought this woman a calamity; by the power of purpose she turned it into a vocation.

You will say, "To what purpose then do you invite me?" There is only one purpose worth living for: that is to gain *character*—to be like Christ. What does that mean? It means that there was once a life lived on this earth which all men, irrespective of religions and theologies and non-theologies, agree in calling the Perfect Life. It was supremely holy, pure, and tender. It was the highest exposition of what duty means that the world has ever known. It was dedicated to the truth, and was so sacredly loyal to truth, that He who lived it called Himself *the* Truth. It was so perfect a pattern of what human life can be at its highest, that He who lived it called Himself also The Way and The Life. It was a life lived in the very eye of God, yet consecrated to the completest service of humanity. It erred neither in the direction of mysticism nor asceticism. It was practical and brotherly, broad and high, intensely human, yet truly Divine; it was the boldest of all human lives, as it was the best, the simplest, as it was the holiest. It was absolutely manly, and was never disfigured by the faintest stain of cowardice or double-dealing; and as it was spent among men and for men, so at last it was given for

men in a glorious death which has been for the hope and healing of the nations. That life was the life of Christ. Other lives have had elements of greatness in them, but this was the greatest; elements of goodness, but this was the best. For nearly nineteen centuries all that is noblest in human life has sprung from the impulse and power of that life once lived in Palestine. That life has furnished us with the eternal ideal of what we ought to make of our lives, and to follow that ideal is the one purpose which the greatest souls have felt to be worth living for and worth dying for.

There is the ideal, then, and, as we have already seen, it is with the vision of the ideal that purpose should begin. You will have no impulse to run the race until you consider the goal. Ah, men laugh at ideals, but it is only when they have been false to them, or too cowardly to pursue them. You may never be all you wish to be, but you will always be the better for putting your ideal high. I pity the man who has a low ideal, but still more do I pity the man who has no ideal; and though it may be a mean ambition to seek to be a millionaire, or to get power for the sake of power, or popularity for the sake of public praise, yet the coarsest and most vulgar man who lives for these things, which the noblest men unite in holding cheap, is, after all, a better man, and a man more to be praised, than he who, with all the wealth of life at his disposal, does not attempt to use it because he has no sense or

appreciation of the value of the opportunity which is his.

Do you say, "But my will is weak and wavering!" Train your will, then, till it becomes steady and strong, and you will be surprised to find how soon the act of willing develops the power of willing. Do you say, "But I cannot do this!" Out upon such cowardice! It is unworthy of a man. You can do whatsoever you set yourself to do. Do you say, "But I am surrounded with bad men!" You need have no contaminating confidences with them, and no bad man can make you bad if you will be good. Do you say, "But think how long the quest, how difficult the discipline!" Exactly; the hardness of the discipline is proportioned to the splendour of the result. Is the drudgery of holiness, of character-making, worse than any other drudgery? Is it worse than the drudgery of fame, of which Dickens said that all he was he owed to the habit of tireless industry and patience; or of literary excellence, concerning which Robert Louis Stevenson has told us that long before he dared to print a line he experimented ceaselessly in the study and combination of words; or of power, the quest of which made Bonaparte the hardest-worked man in Europe, and led him to say, with an enthusiasm which we may well emulate, that "impossible" was a blockhead of a word, and was not found in his vocabulary? Men take infinite pains and exercise infinite purpose to win these things, but they will take no pains to win

character. And yet, to achieve character—how much greater a thing than to gain wealth, or fame, or power, since all else fades, and character alone remains! Summon your purpose to this supreme task, and remember that the bravest and noblest lives of this generation have been lived by young men, by men like Arthur Toynbee and Keith-Falconer, and Mackay of Uganda, and Bishop Hannington, who have lived and died for the world as truly as did Paul himself. There is no time to lose. It is given to youth to save the world, because youth is the period of enthusiasm, of ideal-worship, and of purpose. Let your daily litany be—

Here hath been dawning
Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ?

In that single, simple verse of Carlyle's, the secret of all victorious life is hidden.

ON THE MADNESS OF YOUTH, AND THE
DUTY OF BEING MAD

ON THE MADNESS OF YOUTH, AND THE DUTY OF BEING MAD.

THERE is no doubt that Hamlet was mad. Either there are ghosts, or there are no ghosts. Sane people say there are none, so that people who affirm the opposite must needs be mad. But that was by no means the limit of Hamlet's madness. Sane people, with a predominant idea of getting through the world with the least possible inconvenience, find a little conscious blindness a most excellent quality. The first article in a sane confession of faith is to make the best of both worlds—especially this, however, because no one can be quite sure that there is another. People who profess and practise this creed naturally want to stand well with Authority. It is not in them to speak a word against the powers that be. The case of Hamlet's father is one best left alone. Why stir up mud? "The king is dead ; long live the king !" Hamlet can have a very pleasant time of it in this world if he likes, and the garden-scene is past history. But Hamlet did not think so. He persisted in turning up the mould that covered the face of that lamentable dead past. He absolutely refused to respect the rights—the sacred rights—of interment. He allowed the past to influence all his actions. He said, "Here's a wrong to be righted, a

wickedness to be punished, and I cannot sleep o' nights till justice is done." That is why he saw ghosts. That was why he lost his appetite for life, and said, "Man delights me not, nor woman neither." And from these circumstances it is clear that Hamlet was mad.

The madness of Hamlet is proved by another circumstance even more conclusively. Why did he behave as he did to Ophelia? What made him exclaim (in the very worst taste, too), "Go, get thee to a nunnery; why shouldst thou be a breeder of sinners"? The reason was that he had lost faith in woman, because he had a grim suspicion, amounting to a damning certainty, that his own mother was a bad woman. Believing that, as he did, he could trust no woman. He doubted the existence of all virtue, because he had found it wanting where he expected most to find it. Sane people do not behave in this fashion. They look calmly into the face of vice, and when vice leers at them, they wink the eye and laugh back, with the air of those who know all about it. These are the people who have written and caused to be circulated eloquent tracts, which prove the national necessity of prostitution. These are they who hold that it is a good thing for young men to sow their wild oats. They are pretty numerous in Paris, which may be described as their head-centre; and there fathers initiate their boys in immorality, because they say they would rather do it themselves than that any one else should do it. Why a man

should fly into a tearing fury because he finds that a woman is not pure, and straightway call the majestic firmament fretted with golden fire "a pillared rottenness," is naturally more than they can understand. Why men should go about expecting to discover excellence or perfection in either man or woman is beyond their power of reason, and they shriek angrily that such a man is mad. Hamlet took the presence of vice in the world so sorely to heart, that henceforth life was poisoned to him, and the world a charnel-house. He felt the bruise and hurt of that fatal discovery in every fibre of his young innocence. "More fool he!" cries the cynic; "I knew all that when I was seventeen, and have lived very comfortably ever since. Of course the world's bad, but it is a very pleasant world for all that; and what you call vice is really a very pleasant mistress, if you know how to treat her properly." If the cynic is sane, then the idealist is mad. Hamlet was an idealist, and therefore he was mad.—Q. E. D.

Hamlet was haunted by an ideal; that was the real ghost that troubled him. He was Shakespeare's version of King Arthur. He wanted to found a perfect kingdom, where all knights should be true and all ladies chaste, where it should be the work of all in authority to ride abroad redressing human wrongs, and preferring to be vanquished in the right to being victorious in the wrong. He had a high conception of what a king should be. He had arrived at the notion that character is the only real

kingliness. That again proves his madness. "What a fool he must have been!" cries the cunning man of the world. "Why, everybody knows that all statesmanship is founded on compromise, and that kings are not amenable to the common standard of morality. We can't get perfect governments; and if we did, we couldn't stand them for a day. We don't want true knights; we like them better with a little rough human animalism in them." No doubt. It was so that Modred and his companion curs murmured against King Arthur. What Guinevere objected to in Arthur was his perfection; it was the "pure severity of perfect light," and it hurt her vision. She honestly said she would have loved Arthur better if he had had a few redeeming vices. She did not say that, however, till she was herself vicious. Possibly that was the reason why she said it. Imperfect people object to perfection because it rebukes them. People who are shaky in their own morals are not particular what sort of morals a king has; the less the better, in fact. That again was where Hamlet went mad. He was athirst for perfection. He did not believe in redeeming vices. He could not respect any kingship that was bankrupt in character. He pitched his life a tone too high, and the instrument broke under the pressure. In other words, he was mad.

There was a young carpenter once who lived in an obscure Jewish village. He was poor, and had no Scriptures of His own, so that He had to study them

in the little synagogue of Nazareth. This brought Him into constant contact with the religious authorities of His day, and the more He saw of them the less He respected them. Suddenly He became famous. Whole country-sides emptied themselves at His approach, and the multitudes so thronged Him that He often had no leisure so much as to eat. He spoke in the language of the highest poetry, and to this day His words are the most lovely which human literature records. If He had only done that, all would have gone well with Him. But He could not forget the hollowness of the popular religion, nor the hypocrisy of its exponents. He knew men who robbed widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers. He announced what He knew with uncompromising honesty. He would have nothing to do with the "worldly holy"—the sleek religiosity of the day, the powerful ecclesiastics and such like. He preferred the company of honest vice to dishonest virtue. He actually said there was more hope of good in penitent vice than hypocritical virtue. He rejoiced in being sneered at as the Friend of publicans and sinners. The result was that "the best people" who came to hear Him out of curiosity soon got tired of Him. They said at first, "How vulgar He is! He eats with publicans and sinners." Then they said, "How rude He is! If He comes to our dinner-tables He never pays us a single compliment, and even insults us by His remarks." At last they said, "He hath a devil; He is mad." By that time

they had found out that He wanted a perfect world,—"a kingdom of God and His righteousness," He called it—and that was why they called Him mad. So, that they might prove for ever to the world the folly of all idealism and the supreme wisdom of taking things as you find them, they accused Him falsely, and had Him crucified on Calvary; and the world has faithfully carried out the tradition ever since.

It is almost always the young men who go mad in this way. It is the privilege of youth. There is small hope of anybody going mad in Christ's way after fifty. By that time the fine fire has died out the divine frenzy is spent, and the blood is too cool for idealism. If you intend being mad, you must get it done before thirty. Remember it is not only the privilege, it is the supreme duty of youth to be mad. The divine insanity of noble minds is possible to youth alone. Youth alone is capable of defying the cross. What God gives youth to the world for is that the world may be saved by it from corruption. It is a tide of glorious madness, of impossible ideals, of vast unreasoning enthusiasms, hopes, purposes, desires, which streams across the stagnant wastes of life, and keeps the moral atmosphere buoyant and unvitiated. All the saviours of the world have been young men. We cannot conceive of an elderly Hamlet. Most of the great poetry of the world has been written by young men; or, what is the same thing, by men who began to be poets in youth. If

they had waited till they had made their fortunes, they would never have been poets. If that young Carpenter of Nazareth had waited till He had saved enough money to be beyond all peril of want in His great mission, He would never have saved the world. Nothing great is done by the man who is not ready to risk all for an ideal, and that form of madness must be acquired in youth, or not at all.

The youth who does not know how to be mad will never be worth much to this world. There is nothing more contemptible than caution in youth. I have read the lives of great men with some care, and I have come to the distinct conclusion that their madness was the precise measure of their greatness. No one ever did a madder thing than Johnson when he tramped off to London to get his bread how he could by literature; or Carlyle, when he took to "plain living and high thinking" at Craigenputtock; or Wordsworth, when he went to live in a cottage at Grasmere; or Browning, when he deliberately refused all common ways of getting on in life, and went on writing poetry, which no one bought for thirty years, because he felt that poetry was his real mission. They dared all for a belief, and that is clearly madness. They refused chances of making money with supreme contempt, and what evidence of insanity can be more cogent than that? Coleridge was even more utterly mad than they. When he was offered £1,500 per annum to edit a paper, he replied that he did not think any man ought to have more than

£300, and he dared not be encumbered with more. Yet I fancy these five names shine like fixed stars in the firmament of fame, and are not the least in the galaxy of English greatness. We love these men to-day for what the world jeered at when they were in its midst. If they had not been mad enough to dare everything on an impulse, Carlyle would have died an unknown schoolmaster, Browning a bank official, Coleridge a nameless journalist. If a youth should tell me that he finds he has a vocation in literature, I should at once ask him, "Are you mad enough for it? Are you willing to starve with Otway and Chatterton, and toil for bread in a dreary garret with Goldsmith, and write for thirty years without recognition with Browning? If you want a fixed salary before you enter on a literary vocation, you will never enter it. You are not mad enough. We shall be sorry to miss you, and we will try to think of you as 'a mute, inglorious Milton'; but that is the honest truth, you are not mad enough for the position. Go, cautious brother, and be sleek and insignificant; you are not needed here."

The great fault with the Church to-day is that it is not mad enough. There was a time when those who were impassioned by the love of Christ went out to win the world for Christ without fixed salaries. They literally took with them neither scrip nor purse, and they succeeded. They laid their bones on many a strange shore, and from their lonely graves came the impulse of heroism to all the Churches. The

men who toiled at home in the same cause regarded them as the vanguard of the army, the fighting column, the glorious forlorn hope, and when they reappeared in the focus of civilization, they were honoured as those who had literally sacrificed all for Christ. We felt very mean beside them, we poor home-troops ; we saw in them the new crusaders of Christianity, and we felt rebuked by their heroisms. All that is changed now. Committees take care that there shall be little noble madness in their methods. Here is what that keen observer, Laurence Oliphant, said of this 'glorious forlorn hope of Christianity' : " Instead of the missionaries living among the people and identifying themselves with the boys, they have gorgeous houses, wives, and families. A missionary here with a wife and four children gets a house as big as Spring Grove rent free, and £500 a year, and that is called giving up all for the sake of the heathen."

I do not say that such a statement represents the whole case, but it unquestionably represents one feature of it. I have known missionaries who have as truly died for Christ as though they had been burned at the stake. They have endured the rupture of affection, the bitter parting with aged parents, the break-up of family life, sicknesses innumerable, and a noble poverty fostered by their own generosity, until at last they have come home worn out, with the seeds of death in them, and have died before forty. I have known their wives, and the silent heroism of the missionary's wife has yet to find canonization.

Whether a missionary is self-sacrificing or not depends after all upon himself; it is as easy to be an indolent hypocrite under the equator as beneath the Great Bear. Missionaries are no worse than the rest of us: the mischief is that we are not, all of us, better than we are. Let us honour the heroic missionary: but let us at least have enough honesty not to defend the unheroic. We of the unheroic majority are none of us mad enough to risk everything for truth, as did that young Carpenter of Nazareth. There is only one conspicuous man in our generation who has been genuinely mad with the enthusiasm of Christianity: his name is General Booth, and he has done in a generation more for the outcast than all the other Churches have done in half a century.

The phrase by which Jesus described such men was a striking one. He called them violent men, or men "who thrust," and He said that such men took the kingdom of heaven by force. "They that thrust men": how expressive the term! Not the cautious, the polite, the politic, the inoffensive, the moderate; but rather the men of so immoderate a fervour that it is called fanaticism; the men of offensive and unreined aggressiveness of spirit, who thrust and elbow and drive their way through the throng of weaklings, because they see their goal, and will not be denied it—these are the men who succeed. You cannot afford to be considerate of people's prejudices if you have a great work to do, and a short time to do it in. You can scarcely help treading upon some one's toes if you

are thrusting your way in a great crowd, and cleaving it like a wedge, that you may win the coveted coign of vantage. Politeness, suavity, sweet reasonableness, you may expect from the man who treats every truth as open to argument, and every cause as a compromise with error; but not from the men whose words, like Luther's, are "half-battles," and who fiercely thrust their way through a multitude of hypocrites and liars that they may win a little of the free air of honest faith for themselves and those who follow them. Such men find the kingdom of God. They are its masters, invading it and capturing it; claiming its thrones, wielding its influences, subduing the world to its dominion. They are the heroes and soldier-saints of its annals, and they are what they are because this pulse of a divine violence throbs so passionately in them.

I find it impossible to name a single man who has been the leader of a great moral or religious reform who has not been a fanatic. Without a touch of that fanaticism which scorns difficulties and cannot accept defeat, it has never been possible to move men on any large scale, or after any enduring fashion. Knox and Savonarola, Peter the Hermit, John Wesley, Lloyd Garrison and John Gough, Kossuth and Mazzini, separated as they are by centuries and dissimilarities, yet all belong to the one order of great fanatical souls, to whom a truth was a duty, a belief a command. No other men are capable of moving nations: they are born for the rise and fall

of many. It is foolish to complain of the hardness of their temper: you do not expect softness in a sword, nor discrimination in a flame, and when a great work is to be done on an inert and corrupt society, it is only men with the temper of the sword and the fervour of the flame who can do it. If you cross out the names of the fanatics from the calendar of heroes, you will have no other names left. Of course it is quite natural for us, from our obscure havens of smug content, to survey such lives, and complain of them as one-sided. Exactly: and this is just the fact we have to reckon with. The people whom we call narrow are precisely those who have done the greatest works, and they did them because they were narrow. They did not diffuse themselves over a multiplicity of things, but said, "This one thing I do." Their driving-force was their singleness of aim, the sincerity of their temper, the simplicity of their view of life. That all this should appear as madness to people of tepid sympathies and fastidious propriety is natural. To Jesus such madness constituted the letters-patent to the royalty of the kingdom of God.

You may perhaps ask me whether I, who praise the Salvation Army, can myself see the wide realms of life only from the Salvationist point of view? I cannot, but I have often wished that I could. So far am I from resenting their madness of enthusiasm, that I honestly wish I were as mad as they. The thing which most of us have to fear is not fanaticism, but

the absence of it. For can you not see how deep a joy invites us in that singleness of aim which acknowledges only one thing in the world as worth doing, and does it? Is it not worth while to narrow our interests, if we thereby purify, intensify, and heighten them? Is not the fanatic, who is so sure of truth that he says with Paul, "I know whom I have believed"; so careless of carnal comforts that he can exclaim, "What things were gain to me I count loss for Christ"; so rooted in honesty that he can cry with Saxon Harold, "I can die, but dare not lie"; so convinced of the righteousness of his contention that he can proclaim with Luther, "Though I had a hundred heads, I would have them cut off one by one, rather than deny the truth";—Is not such a man the most joyous of men? Can you conceive a happier fate than to belong to this great company of men intoxicated with a divine enthusiasm, which renders them unconscious of hunger, poverty, pain, and martyrdom, and conscious only of a great vocation, and of a Master who from the heavens breathes blessing on them?

For such a madness let us pray. We have caution and culture and the restraining forces of convention always playing on us: of the fanaticism which comes like a flame and inspires us there is all too little in the world. The kingdom of God will only come by the violence of the fanatics. It will not be the cautious, respectable, church-going people who will bring it in. One sometimes sadly wonders whether Churches are not the mausoleums of enthusiasm,

whether there is not something in the very order and decorum of a modern Church which crushes the saving fanaticism out of men. Who has not met a type of man who has been so well balanced, so fastidious, so consistently proper and immaculate, that we have been tempted to say, "O that he would do something rash! O that he could feel a passion, that he could be swept away upon the tide of some great moral movement, some ungovernable emotion!" And we have also seen again and again that when men do thus become divinely rash; when the leader of a party risks anything for a principle; when the reformer suddenly casts away his reserve, and plunges into the fray with a noble recklessness, the heart of the people always rises to the man and the hour. It has always been so: it always will be. There is an untouched deep of moral emotion in the nation, which can only be broken up by the magic of enthusiasm. The crusader never cries in vain, and the Church that began tomorrow a real crusade would doubtless find many foes of its own household, but it would also find a world ready to rise at its call, and in that hour the wildest programme that we could sketch would be justified, and the golden age would come indeed.

I say then to youth, Behold, it is your supreme duty to be mad. It is by your madness that the world must be saved, if it is saved at all; and there is a worse thing even than not being mad: that is, to begin to be mad, and then repent of it and reform. I have known a good many youths who have started

with glorious ideals, who have sought to make a perfect character, a perfect world, a perfect life, but have broken down after a brief trial, and that is the saddest thing that can befall any one of us. At the first vision of the cross they have fled. As soon as persecutions arose the good seed withered away. They thought that it was easy to live a high life, and follow a noble aspiration, and that the world would cry applause upon the spectacle. When they found that the world took to throwing stones, they ran away. Their punishment is the eternal reproach which consumes them. They never hear of a noble deed now without a pang of remorse. It is their greatest shame to recollect in their days of cautious, inglorious, insignificant sanity that once they were divinely mad.

When Quebec was to be taken, the War Office sent first for the oldest general, and asked what he thought of the project. He said it was impossible. They asked the next in rank, and he said it was difficult. They went through them all until they came to Wolfe. "I will do it or die," said he. What they wanted was a madman, and they found him at last in the youngest of their generals. The same appeal is still being made, and it is from youth alone that the response can be expected. The great want of the world to-day is madmen, for, in other words, that means saints, heroes, martyrs, reformers—the men who alone can found spiritual empires, and make the kingdom of God on earth a visible reality.

COURAGE

COURAGE.

THE essence of life is risk. Birth is a risk, childhood is environed by risk, the living of a single day has in it larger risks than the most energetic imagination can comprehend. We are in jeopardy every hour. The splendid Hebrew imagery of the invisible arrow that flies in the noonday, and the noiseless pestilence that wastes in the darkness, is nothing more than a plain statement of the risks of life. We cannot live without accepting these risks.

It is quite possible so to marshal the risks of life before the inward eye, that the only reasonable conclusion appears to be the pessimistic doctrine, that life is not worth living. Who dare beget a child, when he considers how possible it is that the child may be born deformed or imbecile ; that a playmate's random blow may wreck the brain or quench the vision ; that some disease of childhood may wither up the body or close the doorways of the ear ; that after all the anxieties and self-sacrifices of child-bearing, the child may take his own life into his hands, and make the name he bears a curse and cause of spitting ? Who dare leave the guarded nursery, and face the crowded world, when he knows how "sad, and mad, and bad" a world it is ? Who dare take a journey when he reflects how fatally easy it is for a rod of

whirling steel to snap, a rail to loosen, a pointsman to forget the exact instant of his complicated duty, a spark of flame to drop into some hidden corner of the ocean-steamer, whence it can spread unchecked, and grow into "combustion dire"? Yet men do these things, and do them daily. Their life is set upon a rushing whirling star; the soil they tread is but a thin film spread over boiling fire, the air they breathe carries in it the poison germs that have floated from a thousand dying mouths; the very heavens on which they gaze are a blue terror, harmless only by the equipoise of infinite destructive forces, and supreme insecurity attends every breath they draw. Yet men are content to live. What does all this mean but that God means man's first lesson in the world to be courage? In a life which is a series of prodigious risks, how is it possible to live at all, save by the exercise of courage?

Putting the case in this way, it might seem that what we mean by courage is mere insensibility. George Eliot has ironically blessed those who are "well-wadded with stupidity," and who, by virtue of their stupidity, are spared equally the tragic and the rapturous shocks of life. Fear does not visit such persons, simply because they lack the sensitiveness out of which fear is created. The dulness of their imagination is their safeguard, and prevents any keen realization of the risks of life. They are not so much brave as stupid, and what appears to be courage is really callousness.

It is clear then that they can scarcely be called courageous, who merely face without flinching perils which lie beyond their powers of calculation. Yet it is this callousness of nerve and imagination which in the world of action usually passes for courage. A man with nerves of steel and arm like a weaver's beam rides down into some roaring charge, and slashes his way through a host, and spikes the gun that flames upon him, and it is said of him he does it without a change of colour, or the trembling of a nerve. Of course he does: his nerves could not tremble if he wished. His bravery is the bravery of strong blood and big muscles—a thing of the body, not of the soul; the bravery of the enraged bull rather than of the reasoning man. Another man, quietly reared, slight in physique, delicately strung, rides into the same charge, and men remark with a sneer that his face is livid and his hand shakes, and they call him coward. In reality he is far the braver man of the two. He suffers in ten minutes an agony which the other could not know if he lived a century. He accomplishes the supremely heroic task of mastering himself at the command of duty. That is courage, the soul of a man forcing the recreant energies of the body into action, combining, compelling, and marshalling them to some great end, lashing them to their task, dominating them by moral pressure, and securing heroic results out of unheroic material.

If the conscious facing of peril be a true test of courage, it must be admitted that the physician dis-

plays daily a far nobler courage than that which thrives upon the battlefield. A few years ago a young doctor died in one of the London hospitals under circumstances which aroused the sympathetic attention of the whole country. As a last resource in a case of malignant diphtheria, it became necessary to try to clear the choked throat of the patient by suction. No one knew better than this young doctor the frightful risk of contagion involved in such an experiment. The risks of a battlefield, or even of a campaign, were slight in comparison. Yet in the interests of science and humanity this youth, standing upon the threshold of a brilliant career, volunteered for the task, and saved the patient's life at the sacrifice of his own. That was true courage, and of the finest type. He was of the noble order of men who not only prefer death to dishonour, but who know there is no species of dishonour so humiliating as the knowledge that a plain duty has been evaded. And such instances might be multiplied indefinitely. There is no narrative of tragedy upon sea or land, no commonplace story of mining accident, or shipwreck, or fire, which does not surprise us by acts of courage, daring, and self-sacrifice. It makes one proud to be alive to read of these things. It helps us to realize that the discipline of the centuries has not been in vain, that God's method of putting men into a world of risk has justified itself in the development of men who can do their duty, in "scorn of consequence"; so that out of the hourly peril has grown the valiant will, out of the uncertain-

ties of life certainty of principle, out of the temptations to cowardice a conquering fortitude of soul.

I should like to take it for granted that all young men possessed this first element of courage—the willingness to face physical risks at the call of duty. But I fear that this would be a false assumption. The very growth of civilization produces year by year a race of men more sensitive in brain and nerve, and therefore less callous to the visible risks of living. The civilized man both enjoys and suffers far more keenly than the savage, and this increased delicacy of organization, this quicker sense and broader range of feeling, this more luminous imaginative vision, is only too likely to produce youths who will lack the old hardihood which has made our race what it is. Therefore I remind the youth who is humbled by the knowledge of secret cowardice, that courage is a virtue to be sought and developed, and in its finer forms is never accidental or hereditary. We are all cowards by inheritance ; the thing is, to discipline ourselves out of cowardice into courage. We are all apt to seek safe nooks of shelter, smooth anchorages where no perilous waves roar or tempests break, smug, placid, ingloriously secure ways of living ; and if we are to be men we must resist these seductions of a seeming security, and if we are to be brave men we must learn the meaning of Christ's penetrating word, that he who saves his life loses it. I cannot imagine a more horrible fate than to be a conscious coward—to see men on all sides doing things you

dare not do, and becoming by their power of daring what you know you can never be. It is well said that "the coward dies a hundred deaths: the brave man dies but once." Make your mind up to the fact that God meant you to run risks, and take them like a man. If you want any additional spur to such a course, remember that the irony of life is such that, whether you be coward or hero, you cannot escape risk, and that more men die from drains than bullets, from fear of disease than from disease itself. Remember that he only lives greatly who dares greatly, and learns to say with Whittier :—

Better to stem with heart and hand
The roaring tide of life, than lie
Unmindful on its flowery strand
Of God's occasions drifting by :
Better with naked nerve to bear
The needles of this goading air,
Than in the lap of sensual ease forego
The godlike power to do, the godlike aim to know

But it is not merely risk we have to face—it is difficulty, despondence, disheartenment ; and courage is absolutely essential for the conquest of these enemies of manhood. What is frequently called the "turning-point" in the life of a great man usually proves, on examination, to have been simply the hour when courage supplanted cowardice, when resolution overcame the vacillations of a perplexed will. It was so with Carlyle : his hour of conversion was the hour when he cried, "Death? Well, Death, let it come then, and I will meet it and defy it. From that

time," says he, "the temper of my misery was changed : not whining sorrow, but grim defiance." It was so with Nelson : he tells us with touching simplicity how he was sunk in the depths of dismal reverie, without friend or patron, despairing of advancement in his profession, and half wishing himself overboard, when suddenly the thought came that his king and his country were his patrons, and he cried, "I, too, will be a hero!" And from that hour, says he, "a radiant orb" seemed to float before his mind's eye, a meteor-light of hope, which led him on to greatness. And so again, in a yet darker hour, when his merits had been overlooked, and men who were actually in bed, far from the scene of action, had been rewarded for the victories he had won, he is filled with the same exultation of spirit, and says, "Never mind : I will have a Gazette of my own." It was another variety of the same temper which stung the young Disraeli into his famous boast to a hostile House of Commons : "You will not hear me now, but the day will come when you will hear me ;" and it was the same temper, in yet finer expression, which made Fulton, the inventor of the steam-ship, say, as he lay baffled and dying, "Bury me beside the waters of the Ohio, that I may hear in times to come the paddle-wheels of the ships as they pass, bearing their commerce from land to land." Courage was the true keynote of these lives : it has been the keynote of every great life. These men did what others thought, and dared what others dreamed. They would not

admit themselves defeated, they did not know how to beat a retreat. They throve on obloquy, and prospered on contempt. Examine the great biographies of the world, and you will find that the iron chord which sounds through all is Courage. Pierce to the secret of every great man's life, and you will discover it in the unconquerable will, the soul that was unsubdued and unsubduable.

In any true differentiation of the various "forms of courage," then, it is courage with a moral aim that must always stand first. Courage without moral aim is merely animal recklessness; with the moral aim it is a Christian virtue. We have been too long accustomed to categories of the Christian virtues in which courage has no place. We have been told to be meek, gentle, humble, conciliatory, as though the whole effect of Christianity were to produce inoffensive suavity. We have even been urged to sing, "Oh, to be nothing!" as though impotent imbecility were the chief weapon whereby Christ expected to establish His kingdom. Did Christ ever utter one single word in favour of any such monstrous teaching? Was Christ only meek, gentle, suave, conciliatory? Could He have moved all Judea, and have shattered the Roman Empire, and have stirred the souls of uncounted millions through the ages, had He been only this? Why, the finest example of courage the world has ever had was Jesus Christ. To bribe and menace He was as indifferent as a great rock standing amid the foam of waves that break and perish on it. He

mastered His enemies by His courage, He dismayed them with His serenity. And He bequeathed the same temper to His apostles. There is one little incident in the life of St. Paul which is indicative of a finer courage than could be furnished by the records of a thousand battle-fields. At Lystra the people first worshipped and then stoned him, and "dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead." One might have imagined that if this did not put an end to Paul, it would at least end his mission. It did neither; he rose and entered the city—imagine in what condition, after that cruel handling—and on the morrow—what? Rested? Retired from the conflict? Pleaded wounds and disablements? Not he; he went forth "with Barnabas to Derbe, and made many disciples, and *returned to Lystra.*" And yet Paul was physically insignificant, was the most sensitive of men, was "of imagination all compact," was so framed and fashioned that for him pain meant agony, and suffering torture. It is the soul that makes the man, and intrepidity of soul can only spring from moral aim and resolution. I do not suppose that the servant-girls who join the Salvation Army are any more robust than other people, or that the missionary youths who are mobbed by fanatical Chinese are of finer physical mould than the run of youths; yet they endure what Paul did, and in the same spirit. It is the quality of soul that makes them to differ.

For the great majority of young men the true

discipline of courage will be found neither on the battle-field nor the mission-field, but in the trivial round of common life. Many a youth must needs confess with Mark Rutherford,—

For I was ever commonplace ;
Of genius never had a trace ;
My thoughts the world have never fed,
Mere echoes of the book last read.

He will be made to feel in his daily encounters with life that he is a person of no account, that he can be easily replaced, that there are crowds of men as good as and better than he, and that very possibly to the end of his days his life will be dull, grey, uneventful, drudging, unnoticed and unnoticeable. Well, it surely needs a very high quality of courage to face that prospect. Upon the whole, it would be easier to accomplish a Balaclava charge into the "mouth of hell," than to march against that long array of dull years with a stalwart heart. It is a far braver thing, because a harder thing, to live a commonplace life nobly, than to rise for half an hour of one's life into a passion of glorious daring. It may be true that

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name ;

but at the bar of the final account the Judge will rule that the nameless life, lived in a high spirit, counts for more than the life that spent itself upon one chance, and lives by its single memorable hour.

Consider what this featureless, commonplace life really means. How barren it is of external influences

that breed high emotions, how easily it becomes stagnant, how likely it is to be overwhelmed by apathy, listlessness, and despair! Its chief temptation will be disheartenment. "What is the use of trying to be anything?" says such a man. "How can I mould my poor life to any noble shape? Stagnant mediocrity is my portion. Why try to differ from the mediocre? Why not at once submit and do what every one does, and live as every one who drudges like myself lives, and find at least some sort of ease in getting rid of aspirations that only sting me into futile struggle?" Which means in very plain English, "Why not be a coward?" Therefore I emphasize the truth, that however commonplace life may be, it need not be cowardly. If you have true courage, the spirit that hopes, struggles, and endures, life will possess interior nobleness and dignity, however sordid its exterior conditions. "Be of a good courage," was the reiterated advice given to Israel by her leaders, and it was reiterated because no counsel was so much needed. When you are tempted to lose your sense of self-respect because outwardly your life seems to be a failure, when you are urged to throw away your ambitions, to cease troubling over moral excellence, to dismiss intellectual promptings, to live as "other fellows do," to let a narrow life produce in you a narrow soul, a sordid mind: then what you need is courage, "a good courage." That is the key of the position, that is the sword by which conquest comes. Say with Nelson, "I, too, will be a hero,"

and the nearest back street will give you your opportunity, as years of obscure unrewarded service gave Nelson his. The hero creates his own theatre of action ; you can be courageous and heroic anywhere, and nowhere is your intrepidity more needed than in the colourless monotony of a life that can only draw its strength from within, because there is nothing but discouragement without. Do this, and the spirit of courage will transform the whole temper of your life ; and for you the noble words of John Ruskin will be fulfilled : "To be heroic is happiness ; to bear yourselves bravely and righteously in the dazzling of the sunshine of morning ; not to forget the God in whom you trust when He gives you most ; not to forget those who trust you when they seem to need you least—this is the difficult fortitude."

THE GAINS OF DRUDGERY

THE GAINS OF DRUDGERY.

By drudgery, I mean work that in itself is not pleasant, that has no immediate effect in stimulating our best powers, and that only remotely serves the purpose of our general advancement. Such a definition may not be perfect, but it expresses with reasonable accuracy what we usually understand by the term.

Now, if this is what we mean by drudgery, it is clear that we are all drudges. We all have to do many things, day by day, which we would rather not do. Even in the callings that seem to present the most perfect correspondence between gifts and work, such as those of the writer or the artist, drudgery dogs the heels of all progress. Michael Angelo spent weeks in retouching his work, bringing out a muscle here, softening an angle there ; and it was to the unobservant critic who had no eyes to see the effect of all this patient industry, that the great artist uttered his famous aphorism that trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle. Gerhard Dow rose with the lark every morning, manufactured and prepared his own colours ; at thirty had spoiled his sight by the incessant strain he put upon it ; and dying at sixty-seven had not painted more than about ninety pic-

tures. But there is no picture of Dow's that is not perfect, and this perfection was purchased by a drudging attention to details, compared with which the life of the coal-heaver or day-labourer is a life of leisure. Carlyle wrote with the utmost difficulty, and never executed a page of his great histories till he had consulted every known authority, so that every sentence is the quintessence of many books, the product of many hours of drudging research in the great libraries. We show some perception of these facts in our common sayings, that easy writing makes hard reading, and what costs a man little is usually worth little. But few of us have any adequate sense of the immense toil which lies behind the brilliant successes of the great artist or famous writer. And the same thing might be said of the lives of great statesmen, politicians, reformers, merchants, and memorable men in all walks of life. Examine such lives, and the amount of prolonged toil which lies behind all the glitter of public fame is enormous, and to the indolent even appalling. If any man of the Elizabethan period gives the impression of having achieved great things with a certain airy ease and instinctive facility of touch, it is Walter Raleigh. Yet it was of Raleigh that Elizabeth said, "he could toil terribly." The same thing may be said of every great man, so that it is small wonder that we have learned to believe that genius itself is simply an infinite capacity for taking pains.

From time to time we hear arguments in literary

circles advocating the endowment of our modern poets, thinkers, and prophets, on the ground that if they were relieved of the drudgery of bread-winning, they would produce far better and more memorable work. The obvious answer is that we already have large classes of persons who are relieved of the drudgery of bread-winning, and that it is precisely the lives of these persons which are least fruitful of public good. If the argument were sound, we ought to discover our great authors and poets and thinkers among the rich ; on the contrary, they come from such places as Craigenputtock, and other obscure localities, where the mere getting of bread is difficult. There is no denying the fact, that in proportion as life is made easy to a man the development of manhood is retarded, and the less need there is for work the more likely is a man to waste his gifts. The surest way of killing genius is to pension it. Even if we argue the case on its lowest plane, it is abundantly evident that much of the best work ever done by the pen or the brush would never have been done but for the pressure of poverty. Dr. Johnson wrote *Rasselas* that he might raise money to bury his mother ; Lee invented the spinning-jenny to earn bread for his children ; Mrs. Trollope in mid-life took to authorship, and produced fifty novels, because she was left a widow with a family to provide for. The only two known forces that drive men to work are famine and ambition, and of these the former is much stronger than the latter. Drudgery may not be pleasant or

welcome, but it is in the doing of distasteful work that we learn the self-discipline which fits us for work at all, and establish the habit of work which alone can make any high achievement possible.

When a man grumbles about the drudgery of his lot, then I am entitled to conclude that he has not learned the discipline of work, and that it is native indolence rather than suppressed genius which chafes against the limitations of his environment. Browning, in his poem of *The Statue and the Bust*, has laid down the doctrine that it is a man's wisdom to contend to the uttermost even for the meanest prize that may be within his reach, because by such strenuous contention manhood grows, and by the lack of it manhood decays.

If you choose to play, is my principle,
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be what it will.

And this is sound doctrine. The clerk who does not strive to be the best clerk in the office, the carpenter who is not emulous of being the best carpenter in the workshop, is not likely to achieve excellence in any other pursuit for which he imagines his superior talents better fitted. Waterloo was won upon the playgrounds of Eton, said the Duke of Wellington, because the spirit that made the boys at Eton struggle to be first in a game, and discipline themselves in cool nerve and courage to win a school match, was the same spirit which made them steady on the great day when the game was fought with armies, and the prize

was the liberty of Europe. I have little faith in the youth who is always crying out against his condition, and telling an incredulous world what great things he could do if his lot were different. The boast of general talents for everything usually resolves itself into particular talents for nothing. The incompetent clerk, in nine cases out of ten, would be equally incompetent as writer, artist, or speaker. If I were adjured to help a youth to some sphere supposed to be better suited to his gifts, I should first of all need to be convinced that he had performed faithfully the duties of the inferior sphere in which he found himself. The superior talent always shows itself in the superior performance of inferior duties. It is the man who is faithful in little things to whom there is given authority over larger things. He who has never learned the art of drudgery is never likely to acquire the faculty of great and memorable work, since the greater a man is, the greater is his power of drudgery.

I have already mentioned Carlyle as an example of the gains of drudgery, and perhaps there is no more impressive example, because it is notorious that Carlyle always spoke of literature as an uncongenial trade, and only attained its prizes by inconceivable labour. His books were literally wrung out of him, and a man of less enormous energy and persistent patience could never have produced them. The pains he took to satisfy himself of a relatively insignificant fact were incredible. Before writing his essay on *Diderot*, he read twenty-five volumes, at

the rate of one per day. He tells Edward Fitzgerald that for the twentieth time he is going over the confused records of the battle of Naseby, that he may be quite sure as to the topography. He early reached the conclusion that nothing of worth can be done in literature without infinite labour, and he has elaborated the thought in one of his finest passages. "Virgil and Tacitus were not ready writers," says he; "Shakespeare, we may fancy, wrote with rapidity, but not till he had thought with intensity; no easy writer he. Neither was Milton one of the mob of gentlemen who write with ease. Goethe tells us he 'had nothing sent to him in his sleep'; Schiller 'never could get done'; Dante sees himself 'growing lean' over his *Divine Comedy*." "Manufacture," he continues, "is a different matter; write by steam if thou canst contrive it and sell it"; but that was not his way. Literature was to Carlyle the hardest of trades, because he put his conscience into it, and no man of letters of our time, or perhaps of any time, has left behind him a more magnificent example of industry and literary rectitude.

Take, on the contrary, such a life as Coleridge's. Few men have ever been freighted with so vast a treasure of genius. In his early life no one met him without a sense of wonder and admiration; and the love which he excited was as boundless as the wonder. The apostrophe of Lamb felicitously expresses these feelings, and is equally famous and pathetic: "Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring

of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned, Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard!” His knowledge was cyclopædic. His fertility of invention was infinite. A mere list of the books he proposed to write would fill a couple of columns of a daily paper. He proposed an epic poem which was to occupy him for twenty years; grammars of Greek and Hebrew; treatises on philosophy of twelve hundred pages; a history of metaphysics equally comprehensive; a *magnum opus* on Christianity as the only true philosophy; scores of books on poetry, literature, and the fine arts, not one of which was ever written. Well might poor Southey, who by his industrious mediocrity had to support Coleridge’s wife and children, exclaim in despair, “As to your essays, etc., etc., you spawn plans like a herring. I only wish as many of the seed were to vivify in proportion.” But with Coleridge nothing vivified. When he had issued the prospectus of a book, he seemed to think he had written the book. The extraordinary range and brilliance of his mind made all things possible to him, and he lived upon the admiration excited by those possibilities. Not even the compulsion of poverty made him write, for as long as friends would give or loan him money—and surely we may say, as it was said of Goldsmith, “never was literary man so trusted”—he did nothing. Of course the usual explanation of Coleridge’s tragic failure is his indulgence in opium; but no such explanation is

needed. His true defect was a defect of will, of which his fatal opium habit was as much fruit as cause. When we consider the prodigal gifts of Coleridge, it seems hardly too much to say that no such "myriad-minded man" has been among us since Shakespeare ; but nearly all the treasure was wasted for lack of this common-place power of persistence. What he did succeed in producing is the pure gold of literature, and by the fineness of its quality we may measure how much was lost in him. He should have been our English Goethe, but he had no atom of Goethe's enduring patience. "An archangel a little damaged," was Charles Lamb's wistful comment on the later Coleridge. It is the saddest picture in all the wide gallery of English literature : a tragedy more tragic even than that of Keats or Shelley.

Probably I should be right if I said that the men of genius who have done nothing, and who have declined into stagnant obscurity for lack of persistence, out-number by ten to one those who have achieved a reputation. It is no uncommon thing to meet a man who is famous, and to wonder why he is famous. There is little in his appearance, in his conversation, in his personality that impresses us with a sense of genius. We know among our friends, perhaps, two or three men who are more brilliant talkers, and have far more of the personal magnetism of unusual parts. In a word, we are disappointed by what seems to us the commonplaceness of the famous writer. Ah, but there are other qualities of which we take no

account when we yield to such a feeling. Our brilliant friends—do they work? Do they know what it is to drudge at a desk far into the midnight, that they may express their best thoughts and imaginations? Are they content to give up pleasure for the hard discipline of the pen? This is what the famous man has done for years, and it is this which has won him his fame. It is the old story of the tortoise and the hare; it is by steady progress, not by brilliant rushes, that the goal is reached. I have known men with a more exact knowledge and much greater literary power than half the writers who have secured a hearing, who have simply done nothing because of this defect of patience. They have the audacity but not the persistence of genius. They can conceive great things, but resent the drudgery by which alone they are created.

Every one remembers how, a short time ago, the great steamship *Umbria* was stopped in mid-Atlantic by a flaw in her engine-shaft. Relatively to the entire mass of the shaft, and the vast and intricate machinery of the vessel, that flaw was a very small thing indeed; but it was enough to stop the vessel. The main shaft of a man's life is purpose, and the flaw in it is too often a lack of patience and care in little things. Patience constitutes the main element in successful drudgery. Men will not take pains. They will not see to it that all they do is thoroughly done. They have none of that infinite patience which made Michael Angelo spend a week in bringing out

a muscle in a statue with more vital fidelity to truth, or Gerhard Dow a day in giving the right effect to a dew-drop on a cabbage leaf. Their idea of success in life is that it lies at the end of a short cut. They are always looking out for some by-path that they may fall out of the ranks, and leave the tired army plodding on in the muddy road, while they find a royal road of amazing celerity to the summit. They are deserters, and as such deserve to be shot. They are satisfied with no calling which demands patience and endurance, and their desire for some different calling is strictly conditioned by the notion that it is easier or more lucrative. But in the long run the muddy road is the best walking. Somehow the men who doggedly stick to it, who are patient, and pertinacious, and painstaking, arrive at the summit in due time, and do not find the deserters either there or anywhere else within sight. It is not the brilliant idler, but the drudge of the school, who is afterwards heard of as the great lawyer or the learned professor. There is actually no limit to what the power of drudgery can do for a man, or the successes to which it may conduct him. It gives cohesion to his purposes, and in the stormiest sea the great shaft of purpose goes on working with unvarying precision, and his life steadily moves nearer its goal. But where a man has no power of drudging pertinacity, the flaw starts in the shaft under the first stress of weather, and all progress is at an end. Splendidly equipped as such a man may be in every other

respect, all is useless if the main-shaft be not sound ; for when the flaw starts there, the whole ship of life pauses, and hangs useless and unwieldy in the perilous seas.

But the gains of drudgery are not seen only in the solid successes of life, but in their effect upon the man himself. Let me take in illustration a not infrequent case. Suppose a man gives up his youth to the struggle for some coveted degree, some honour or award of the scholarly life. It is very possible that when he obtains that for which he has struggled, he may find that the joy of possession is not so great as the joy of the strife. It is part of the discipline of life that we should be educated by disillusion ; we press onward to some shining summit, only to find that it is but a bastion thrown out by a greater mountain, which we did not see, and that the real summit lies far beyond us still. But are we the worse for the struggle? No ; we are manifestly the better, for by whatever illusion we have been led onward, it is at least clear that without the illusion we should not have stood as high as we do. So a man may either fail or succeed in gaining the prize which he covets ; but he cannot help being the gainer in himself. He has not attained, but he has fitted himself for attaining. It is better to fail in achieving a great thing than to succeed in achieving a little one, and the struggle that fails is, in any case, to be preferred to the stolidity which never aspires. And why? Because the struggle is sure to develop certain

great and noble qualities in ourselves. Thus, though such a man may not gain the prize he sought, he has gained a command over his chance desires, a discipline of thought, a power of patient application, a steadiness of will and purpose, which will stand him in good stead throughout whatever toils his life may know in the hidden years which lie before it. And even if he gain the prize he sought, the real prize is found not in a degree, a certificate, a brief taste of applause on a commemoration day, but in the deeper strength of soul, the wider range of wisdom, which the long discipline of unflagging effort has taught him. So true is this, that Lessing, who was among the wisest of thinkers, said, that if he had to choose between the attainment of truth and the search for truth, he would prefer the latter. The true gain is always in the struggle, not the prize. What we become must always rank as a far higher question than what we get.

The fact is, that none of us sufficiently recognise that the faculty for work is an acquired habit rather than a natural tendency. Centuries of civilization have no doubt bequeathed to us certain forms of hereditary energy ; but at heart we still share the indolence of the savage. There is a great deal of truth in the saying that the idle man often works hardest, because he wants to get back to his idling. What that really means is, that no one begins life by thinking of work as an end in itself, but only as a means to an end. We see that certain things

which we desire cannot be gained without work, and therefore we work. The school-boy perceives that the play-hour is the prize of diligence, and he becomes diligent because he does not wish to be kept in. He would much prefer to play all the time, and if he had the arrangement of the world in his own hands, would take steps for the complete suppression of all schools that taught anything more unpleasant than football and cricket. But after a year or two of school life, the habit of work is set up, until by the time manhood is reached it becomes a necessary condition of existence. By that time, work has become the music of life, the salt of health, the main-spring of character. The habit has become so strong that it seems a normal tendency, and we realize that the worst misery of life is indolence, the highest joy "the efficacy of the fulfilled effort." But the truth is that such a condition is merely the final fruit of a prolonged discipline, and is the golden prize of innumerable leaden hours of drudgery.

It may be said further, that few people have any idea of how far habit will take them even in forms of work which apparently depend almost entirely on moods. The best examples are naturally in the realm of art and literature. To this hour every student of Turner is amazed at his prodigious industry. His sketches are to be numbered by thousands; the actual number placed in the hands of Mr. Ruskin for arrangement was twenty-six thousand. He never waited for moods or inspiration; his energy flowed

with incessant and regular volume. In Walter Scott also we have an example of the same untiring industry. He finished one book only to begin another. Harriet Martineau tells us that she found after a time that the mere act of taking the pen in the hand gave her something to say ; and she never waited for more than ten minutes without getting started. Every one knows that Anthony Trollope wrote a given amount every day, with almost unvarying regularity, for forty years. Young writers talk about waiting for inspiration ; older writers know that the best inspiration is the habit of work. "Three miles a day will carry you a thousand miles in the year," was a saying of Galton's, in which James Smetham took great comfort. It is another version of the classic axiom of "every day its line." All forms of work are really automatic, or can be made so. Once train the mind to know that at a certain hour of each day it must begin to work in a certain way, and after a while it will do so at a word. The slightest finger-touch of purpose will start the machinery. What the youth has to do is to break himself in to this habit of work ; and when once the process is complete, it need never be repeated.

Another example, perhaps an unexpected one, of the faculty of genius for work, we find in Rudyard Kipling. Most people suppose that such stories as his must depend a good deal on inspired moments ; that the sort of man who could write them is a meditative onlooker, watching the play of life from

some calm retreat. What are the facts? Rudyard Kipling owes everything to work. He has led one of the hardest and most strenuous of lives. Of course he has genius, imaginative power, observation; but they have been trained and developed in the school of hard work. At sixteen he had written reams of tales and verse. It was at this mature epoch that he met at dinner the proprietor of a great Indian newspaper, who was struck with the old-fashioned cock-suredness of the boy. He asked him if he had written anything, and finally engaged him at £300 per annum, to go out to India as sub-editor of its most influential paper. Every one who knows anything knows that the life of a sub-editor is much like that of the toad under the harrow. Add to that the debilitating climate of India, and think of what the life of this youth of sixteen must have been. He has given a glimpse of it in the impressive opening of one of his most powerful stories, the *Man who Would be King*. What chance there, most folk would say, of producing stories? But it was in such conditions that much of his best work was done. He also could toil terribly. A year or two ago, when he might have been the lion of the London drawing-rooms, he suddenly disappeared. He left no address; his own relatives called at his chambers in vain. He had gone into the heart of the country with a man and a typewriter. There he worked steadily for ten hours a day till he had produced his book. When the task was finished, he was almost speechless and paralyzed with

the tremendous nervous strain. But he had done what he meant to do ; he had refused to fritter his time in social frivolities, and had kept the public ear at a time when it was most necessary for him to justify the fame which his first book had brought him. Depend upon it, behind all great achievement there lies great toil : nothing that is worth doing is done easily. "The habit of work" again—that is the secret of success.

Take, again, the life of Mr. Spurgeon. At twenty he was famous. He possessed a voice that was music, and a fertility and rapidity of mind which made oratory easy to him. It was no trouble for him to speak ; he early discovered that he could say exactly what he wanted to say, and in the precise form which he desired. What a temptation to a lazy man ! How easy would it have been for Spurgeon to have relied on that fatal facility of speech ! Most people quite expected that he would do so, and prophesied the usual fate of the rocket and the stick. And no doubt this would have happened had not Spurgeon early acquired the habit of hard work. He had the sense to see that he could never sustain the immense position he had won without toil. No greater worker has ever been known in the Church or out of it, unless it were John Wesley. He methodized his life. He ransacked the old Puritan literature for similes, metaphors, quaint expressions, out-of-the-way anecdotes. He employed men to do nothing else but this for him. One morning at breakfast,

when a number of ministers were present, he remarked how pleasant it was to hear the birds singing in the first sunlight at four o'clock in the morning. "Are you up at that hour?" said some one. "Why, yes," said he; "I am often up and at work." Here, again, the habit of work is illustrated; behind the glitter of popularity there was the discipline of immeasurable toil—a discipline never relaxed till death hushed the busy wheels of purpose.

But there are yet higher points of view from which it is easy to discover that drudgery is the prime weapon of civilization, and the most beneficent force at work upon society to-day. We should welcome it because we see that by its force alone, continually operating on society, men have left behind them the indolence of the savage, and have created the great commonwealths of mutual labour, where the arts flourish, where learning is honoured and valued, where the high achievements and great rewards of progress cast a glory upon human life, and make it a divine wonder and a noble joy. In the lands where the necessity for labour is least, man is still at his lowest, and the luxuriant climate never fails to breed the enervated race. But, on the contrary, we see that where the sky is grey and the climate unkindly, where the soil yields nothing save to the diligent hand, and life itself cannot be supported without incessant toil, man has reached his highest range of physical and intellectual development. Behind the dykes of Holland, under the grey skies of Britain, on the sterile

soils of Scotland and New England, great races have thriven, and have built the roads of progress along which the civilized world moves unceasingly to its unseen goal. In moods of indolent depression, when the monotony of incessant labour weighs upon us, we may perhaps covet, as the dyspeptic hero of "Locksley Hall" coveted, some far-distant "Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea"; but in our manlier hours we shall cry,—

I to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower
pains ;

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime,
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time ?
Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day,
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

One of the chief lessons, then, which youth has to learn in its apprenticeship to life is the nobleness and gains of drudgery. The least bit of work well done is more to be desired than the most luxurious idleness. The people least to be envied in the world are those who do not know the joy of earning their bread, and are provided for "without the sweet sense of providing." There is, as Carlyle so often assured us, a perennial nobleness in honest toil. The bread for which we have worked is the only bread that is sweet to us, and by it the soul is fed not less than the body. If we cannot altogether agree in the aphorism of a great French writer, who is himself an example of amazing industry, that "the man who

works is always good," we can at least agree that he has become possessed of the elements of self-reverence and self-control, and treads a path which makes for goodness, and aids in its development. Those of us who have never known the day when we had no work to do, do not know how much we are indebted to the law of drudgery for such virtue of life and rectitude of thought as we possess. There is a worse hardship than drudgery: the hardship of indolence. The youth who is intent on making the best use of life will recognise that principle, and will learn to be grateful to that invisible Taskmaster who has made his life consistently laborious, and permitted him no bread nor leisure which he has not earned.

But over and above all these considerations that pertain to ourselves and our own interests, there is the obligation which lies upon us in the thought of our relation to the race. Others have built the houses in which we live, the churches in which we worship, the roads by which we travel. By the toil of patriots and sacrifice of martyrs there has been built up, inch by inch, through a thousand years of struggle, the great edifice of liberty and order which is our inheritance to-day. By the patient drudgery of scholars have come the fruits of learning, by the unrecognised heroism and unrewarded labours of many a man, writing in his lonely garret the book that brought him bare bread, the great literature which to-day is our boast and joy, our pride and consolation. We are the heirs of an immeasurable past, the residuary

legatees of all the ages. It has been the business of each generation to add its stone to the growing cairn, its contribution to the general wealth of life, and pass upon its way un murmuring to the final shadows. Our parents drudged for us, and if we are what we are, it is because hands that are long since dust once toiled for us, and generations of vanished lives were sacrificed in our service. He who ignores these obligations is a traitor to the race. As the past toiled for us, so now it is our turn to toil for the future. The gains of a past drudgery we inherit, and it is for us to add to the growing store. And this we may do in the certain conviction that no work well done can be worthless, that the humblest life lived in diligence and patience may be truly noble ; for we live under a reign of law, which attaches "to every wrong and error a measured, inevitable penalty, to every rightness and prudence an assured reward—penalty of which the remission cannot be purchased ; and reward, of which the promise cannot be broken."

MONEY

MONEY.

WHAT is the secret of human happiness? We all want to make the best use of life, to get the most out of it. From inarticulate beginnings we each gradually build up for ourselves a certain philosophy of life and shape a certain scheme of action. One tells us health is the secret: therefore we seek it and become athletes. Another says "culture": therefore we seek the joy and intellectual purification of books. Another says "art": so we set about educating the fine sensibilities which interpret colour and form and music. Another names religion: so we seek to cultivate the pious impulses and emotions which minister to sanctity. But whatever voice does not speak, one voice is always clamant, strenuous, urgent, preaching *money* as the real basis of all human happiness. Gold is the key that unlocks all doors—

The strongest castle, tower, or town,
The golden bullet beats it down.

Now it is at least clear that money has value. For example, money means leisure, time to cultivate the mind and taste, emancipation from the meaner drudgeries which repress the noble ardour of the soul, and we have even been told that it creates an earthly paradise wherein life has nothing to do but grow in-

sensibly beautiful and happy. Money means power : it translates our wishes into realities, it lifts our purposes into achievement. Money means friends : with the possession of money the social genialities of life are laid open to us, the world is disarmed of its hostility, and life of its bitterness : mankind becomes one multitudinous sunny smile for us, one outstretched friendly hand. "What," we say, as we look at the little insignificant bit of gold that lies in our hand, "can you indeed do all this?" And a vast clamour of voices solemnly asseverates that it can. "Put money in thy purse : get money, honestly if you can, but get it : for money is the only power that is thoroughly respected in this world," is the constant counsel of worldly-wise men. And I am bound to admit that the general aspect and action of society confirms the statement. Can we be surprised, then, that young men grow up to think of money as the thing best worth having in life, that they hunger for it, love it, and toil for it, and too often sell their souls to win it ?

Such is the philosophy of the world, and it is hard for even the most unworldly of us to resist it. There are times when I have felt like contradicting the voice of the world no more. Shall I tell you when? Well, there is a girl toiling with her needle in a back street yonder. She is beautiful, noble-spirited, but poor. On her toil a widowed mother and young family depend. The seeds of consumption are in her—not ripened yet, but they soon will be if she stays in the

sodden atmosphere of that back street. Now, if she were rich, she would take the wings of the morning and fly away to Mentone, Algiers, Davos : she would live to be a happy wife and mother : but because she is poor she must die. Then I say, " Here is a life lost for want of money. Yes, money is indeed great, since it means the difference between life and death ! "

Or, again, there is a youth of genius born yonder in a weaver's cottage in the obscure town of Kirkintilloch. His name is David Gray. Here are some lines that he wrote as he lay dying :—

Come to me, O my mother, come to me,
Thine own son, slowly dying far away.
Thro' the moist ways of the wide ocean, blown
By great invisible winds, come stately ships
To this calm bay for quiet anchorage.
They come, they rest awhile, they go away,
But, O my mother, never comest thou !

He has written many other verses, some of them comparable in charm to the mellowest lines of Keats. Would any rich man have missed two hundred pounds a year given to David Gray when his youth began to sink under the pressure of penury and disease? Rich men lose that sum without a pang over a night's baccarat. Yet that would have saved to England one in whom was the promise of a great poet. When I reflect on this, I say again, money is indeed a power, since it determines the development or annihilation of genius.

But it is when you tell me that money is absolutely necessary to human happiness that I dissent, because

I find that the poorest men have often been the happiest and the greatest. America is the land of millionaires, yet all the greatest men, Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Webster, Clay, have died poor. If money produced greatness, Westminster Abbey should be full of monuments to millionaires: no millionaire has ever been buried there, and the great names upon the walls are mostly the names of poor men. David Livingstone is buried there, but I much doubt if such a fate will happen to Colonel North. I cannot recall the name of a single heroic millionaire, but I can remember Marvel's garret, and Milton's honourable penury, and Gordon's contempt of luxury. If the lack of money is capable of repressing the noble ardour of the soul, it is a curious contradiction that the Poet's Corner commemorates a glorious company of paupers, and that the only way in which a millionaire has ever become famous has been by giving his money away. The fact is, wealth has done far more to stifle genius than poverty. The late Duke of Devonshire was on the brink of a brilliant intellectual career when he succeeded to his vast estates, and it is the universal testimony of his friends that he sank beneath the immense weight of his inheritance, and forfeited the promise of his youth for wealth. In literature even a moderate competence has often proved fatal to ambition, and the really great writers have usually been those who had nothing to rely on but their pens. Moreover, we forget that the Divine Man adored by Christendom was a poor man. It

may be doubted if Christ ever possessed any money after He left Nazareth. We never read of His giving money. He had none to give. When He wanted a coin to illustrate His teaching, He had to borrow it. I do not suppose that He had a purse, for when they crucified Him the soldiers gambled for His clothes, but found no money on Him which they could divide. Yet was He unhappy? Did poverty chill the ardour of His soul, or poison the sweetness of His life? Here is the reply—"My peace I leave unto you." That was the wealth of Jesus: Peace.

I do not denounce the possession of money; that would be mere affectation and hypocrisy. Where money has been justly earned, it is, to some extent, a testimony to a man's character and capacity. Christ never denounced the mere possession of money, but the love of money. There were some things that Christ took for granted: one was that the world was made up of rich men and poor men. He did not say that one was necessarily better or worse than the other. He did not condemn the rich for being rich. He said that wealth was a peril, and so it has always proved. It may even be argued that there will always be rich men in the church, and why? Because Christianity educates character, and in the long run character tells in the pursuits of life, and finds its way to the front. No, it is not wealth, but the callousness of wealth, not money but the love of money, the insatiable greed, the passionate quest of it, which is the withering, blighting, diabolical thing

that eats into men's souls with a fiery and incurable corrosion. Whether a man is what we call wealthy or poor is not the question. A poor man may be as avaricious over his pence as a rich man over his pounds. It is a question not of possession, but of temper; and any man who hoards, and scrapes, and pinches, and is greedy, because he looks to money as the great end of life, even though his parsimony has the most frugal financial result, is a miser in heart, and therefore a traitor to the spirit of Jesus.

There are men, says the apostle Paul, who *will* be rich. That means that there are men who are so mastered by their greed for money that they become unscrupulous. They are so convinced that money is the true end of life that they will have it, at whatever cost. And then begin madness, wearing anxiety, passionate hope and fear, plotting, planning, cheating, grinding, gambling, speculating without capital, horrible spasms of despair upon the brink of ruin, shocks and terrors which are torture, till, perhaps, after years of toil which have taken the brightness from the eye, and the colour from the hair, and have nearly drained dry the pulses of the heart, such a man gets what he wanted—wealth. And what does it amount to? Why, he has *got the knowledge that he has got money*—and that is all. After all a man can only live in one house, and sleep in one bed, and eat one meal at a time. There is actually a point at which money becomes absolutely valueless in the purchase of comfort: it has done all that it can do.

"Ah," said a very rich man as he showed a visitor over his costly mansion, "all I get out of this is board and lodging." Have you ever thought of that? Have you ever perceived that beyond the vulgar satisfaction of feeling you are rich there is nothing to be got out of great wealth but great embarrassment? Yet I know men who are white-haired at forty, who for the love of money have given up everything, and now are nothing but so many scheming brains angling for more money. And I know others who have got their money by means that they would not care to speak about, and a guilty secret is locked up with their gold which taints it all, and rusts it with the stain of iniquity. And I know others who are beginning to discover that they have got nothing after all, for they have lost their self-respect and killed their better selves, and I can plainly see what the end will be—a madhouse where they rave about their lost thousands, or a dreary deathbed, where no one performs any service that is not paid for, and where every one who looks on is burning to fly upon the spoil as soon as the dead man is huddled under ground. That is what comes of men who *will* be rich: they fall into temptation and a snare, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

For the thing which we have need to note is, that when a man loves money he soon begins to love nothing else. The drink mania is bad enough, but the money frenzy is not less cruel and insatiable. The profligate has sunk low enough, but the miser has

touched a yet lower deep of defilement. And there is not one of us who is not liable to this frenzy. It is a thing so very easily commenced. From economy to parsimony, from parsimony to penuriousness, from penuriousness to the love of hoarding, from hoarding to avarice, are so many short stages which form a track trodden by the feet of thousands. It is so easy to take more pleasure than you ought in your gains—in your honest and honourable gains—till the more you have the less you give, and the less impulse is there in you to generous deeds. I dined with a very rich man once, who expatiated quite sincerely upon the theme that every man ought to give a tenth of his income in charity. He said that when he had only £60 per annum he did so, and I admitted that this was generous. It was generous, because it was the fruit of sacrifice. But he had then £100,000 per annum, and he was surprised when I remarked that £10,000 of that sum given in charity was not generous. I pointed out that giving had to be measured not so much by what we gave as by what we had left when we had given, and that any giving which left a man with £90,000 in his pocket had no real element of generosity in it. But this is only an instance of how great possessions make religion difficult even to the best-meaning man. The whole difficulty lies in the wrong conception of money as an end instead of a means. Mr. Carnegie has said that every man who dies a millionaire dies dishonoured, and why? Because money has been to him an end

and not a means. The man to whom money is a means only will first make proper provision for his own family, and then seek to divest himself of his wealth as fast as he can, that he may do some good with it while it is his to use.

In no age has the general thirst for riches, and the general belief in wealth as the prime end of life, been so great as in ours ; and for that reason it is well to remember that we may buy our gold too dear. For example, that man buys his gold too dear who gives up a life of calm in the country, for which he is best fitted, that he may plunge into the confusion of the city, for which he is ill fitted, merely for the sake of a little larger income. There are men who are entirely fitted for a city life, and there are others to whom a city life is always a misery. The price of city life for many men is depressed vitality, nervous trouble, and broken health. When they breathed the clean air of the country, they knew what it was to enjoy life : and they know the true bliss of being alive nowhere else. In the old days, before they passed into the smoke-cloud of the city, they knew something of what communion with Nature meant ; they lived a life of simple pleasures and quiet duties ; they felt their life in every nerve, and were buoyant with well-being. They live in the city to-day, but their heart is not in it. A breath of air from the country, the sight of flowers, the passing of a market cart even, sends their thoughts back to the green pastures of youth with an infinite yearning. Their snatched glimpses of the country

or the sea are like the glimpses of a lost paradise. Why, then, are they in the city? Because they can earn a little more money here—that is all. They forget the narrow rooms, the long unlovely street, the stagnant air, the endless tumult—because they earn a little more money. They have sold every thing that gave them most joy in life for an extra pound a week. Do not think I mean to enter on the stale argument of the town versus the country—many of us must live in towns, for our duty is here, and where duty lies desires must not intrude. But many men have no business to be in the city. They ought to be carrying out that most urgent problem of modern life—the reviving of the village community, the quickening of the small towns, which are being drained into depletion to swell the monstrous growth of the city. They are not here because either duty or aptitude, or necessity, called them: only that they may make a little more money. And who cannot see that they buy their money too dear: that five years longer life in the sunshine is worth more than even five thousand a year for life: that to live where we can best fulfil ourselves is a joy and duty, for the loss of which there is no recompense, and for the wilful sacrifice of which there is no excuse. A little more money—and such a little too—and for that you have bartered your best self, and all the purest and most enduring pleasures of life.

That man buys his money too dear who sacrifices intellectual tastes for it. This is so common a folly

that we have almost ceased to notice it, but it is one of the saddest tragedies of human life. I wonder whether there is any more bitterly instructive spectacle than the houses of many rich men, who have given up their lives to money-making. The dining room—that is very large; but the library—that is a cupboard. You go from basement to garret without one sign that a thinking creature owns the spacious rooms. There are a few books, it is true, but they were given the man fifty years ago on his boyish birthdays, and have not been opened since. The other day a man who is proud of being able to live as a gentleman on £700 a year was obliging enough to furnish the world with his budget. It is instructive: it costs him £20 per annum for wine, £250 for food, and £3 for books and papers! I do not want to know that man: it appears to me that he is rather a patent digesting machine than a man. I do not say that every man can be a scholar, or have a wide knowledge of literature; but I do say, that to buy opulence by starving the mind, to live in a world that quivers with thought, without once being conscious of it, to have no share in the ideals that move the greatest spirits to utterance, is to buy gold at the price of manhood, and it is therefore to buy it too dear.

But if in these instances a man manifestly buys gold too dear, what shall we say of the man who gains wealth by compromise of truth and conscience? How many businesses are there that would stop

to-morrow if they were judged by a clean conscience? How many men are there who know perfectly well that it is only by a sacrifice of conscience that they can justify their methods of life at all? And it is because they know this so well that they will not hear of the ethics of Christ being applied to common life and daily conduct. Their idea of the "simple Gospel" is that it means the preaching of doctrines that soothe the mind or console the heart, but not of truths that search the conscience and arraign the conduct. Religion is for them a weekly soporific, not a daily standard of life. It is an excellent recipe for making the best of both worlds; not a powerful incentive to make the only world we know a little better for our presence. And it is because men have lived so long in this tradition, that we are told to-day, and with truth, that the Christianity of Christ has never yet been fairly tried. And why has it not been fairly tried? Because in every age the power of gold has been stronger with the mass of men than the power of truth. Here and there a man has risen up who has preferred manhood to gold, and on some large and noble scale has lived so absolutely in accordance with his conviction, that a transient thrill of admiration has passed through the most callous. We have said, "Yes, it was a noble thing to live like Paul, or Xavier, or Wesley; to scorn delights and live laborious days as a Stradivarius or Spinoza; to starve in proud adherence to right with Marvel or Carlyle; to prefer poverty in the domain that best suits us, to

riches in the realm that kills our finer self, as did Wordsworth,"—but we have not followed them. At the first gleam of gold our manhood has succumbed. We have preferred a maimed manhood with comfort, to a strong, untainted, and self-reverencing manhood with poverty. And because this is so, because in our age, as in every age, and perhaps in ours more than in any other, the material aspects of life have been allowed to usurp the spiritual, it is true to-day that the most unchristian sights in all the world may be seen in Christian England, and for a nation calling itself Christian never was there so terrible a discrepancy between creed and conduct! Alas, for our national prosperity—for we have bought our gold too dear!

If you ask me, then, what is the greatest need of our day, I reply, *Men who will dare to be poor*. We want men who will dare to be poor rather than make money by taking an unbrotherly advantage of their neighbour: who will remember that the wise man's poverty is better than the fool's prosperity: who will so live that men will realize that poverty has no power to degrade manhood any more than wealth has power to exalt it. Such was the life of the Christ who had no place to lay His head, yet was so rich that the centuries have been drawing on the stores of His moral wealth ever since He tabernacled with men. Such has been the life of many other men, who stand outlined against the sky-line of history as the greatest benefactors of the race. And if

you further ask why we specially need men who will dare to be nobly poor to-day, the answer is that this is the age of the plutocrat, when the thirst for money is universal and governs all that we are pleased to call the civilized world. Young men, defy that tradition! Remember there is no shame in poverty—the only shame is sin, and dare to be poor rather than sell your manhood for gold. To die worth a million of money is a poor boast, either here or hereafter: to die worth a character is to have served this world, and to have won the other.

It was said of Judas, who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, that he “went to his own place”; we go to our own place even in this world. The man who lives for money is apt to find that there are things which money cannot buy after all. Money can open the doors of what is called society, but it cannot make him at home in it. During those long years given to money-grubbing the finer sensibilities have decayed, and for him there will be the vulgarity of wealth and not its culture. There are, no doubt, many rich men who have kept touch with the movements of moral and intellectual life, but for many more the habit of money-hunting has dominated all other habits. They have gone to their own place—a golden prison. The weary drama has played itself out in the loss of youthful enthusiasms, slow ossification of the heart, gradual deterioration of thought, palpable disintegration of character, till at last the love of money has devoured all other loves and impulses,

and they have prostrated themselves in horrible obeisance to the foul money-god, the demon-idol of Mammon. They die worth so much money : it is all they are worth.

With all this before you, if you are wise, you will sit down and ask whether wealth is worth the price men pay for it.

I read one morning in the *New York Tribune* an article which bore the title, *Is it worth the Price?* It stated that that week three well-known men of business, each of whom was under forty, each of whom had accumulated a rapid fortune, had died by suicide. In each the nerve and brain had been completely wrecked by the frightful pressure of a life lived in the mad pursuit of wealth. Such cases are not exceptional. There is scarcely a week when we do not read of suicides through "business worry." Quite apart, therefore, from any question of authority in the Christian ethic, it is worth asking whether there is not sound sense in the apostolic saying, that "godliness with contentment is great gain." Put side by side a life of moderate competence and modest ambitions, with some fruitful leisure for scholarship, culture, friendship—

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing,
and a life of frantic distraction spent in the pursuit of wealth, and who is there who cannot discover which is the better part, and which best fits the dignity of a being with a soul?

There is no lesson that I could wish to force home upon young men with such directness of impact as this lesson of the hatefulness of a life whose dominant chord is love of money. We are in danger of being overwhelmed by the vulgarity of wealth. We are already replacing the Gospel of Christ by the gospel of getting on in life. The annual accumulations of this country are stated to be two hundred millions. The peerage has become the perquisite of the plutocrat. The one crusade which attracts all kinds and conditions of men is the crusade of avarice. Society becomes more luxurious year by year, more ostentatious and extravagant, and there is a corresponding loss of moral fibre in the nation. There is only one end to this: when nations seek wealth before righteousness, and the youth of nations covet luxury instead of character, revolution is not far distant. And if it be true that what the youth of a nation think the nation will soon think, it can only be by the regeneration of youth that salvation can come.

Yet, when we blame the age, let us not forget that we have had in our own generation many splendid examples of men who have risen above the sordid materialism of modern civilization, and it is for us to follow them.

Who can estimate what Gordon has done for us by the moral force which his life has communicated to the world, the moral energy with which he has quickened many a man and woman striving to do right in some difficult and bitter hour? Who does

not remember how Stanley speaks of Livingstone : of the astonishment he felt as he watched this old man with the Bible in his hand day by day, so utterly devoid of personal ambition, so calm, so bent on helping the sorrowful and disinherited, till at last that spectacle of the sincerity of Livingstone converted this keen and hostile watcher to a faith in Christianity? Or, when we talk of the power of money, who does not recall the splendid figure of Garibaldi, and remember how he saved a nation, crowned a king, and gave liberty to a people, and then quietly paid his hotel bill, and, with less than two shillings in his pocket, went back to his little farm in Sicily—surely one of the noblest episodes of unselfish patriotism in the history of the world ! And have not our thoughts recently followed into his retirement the greatest historic figure of our age : a man, if ever there was one, who has lived up to the highest standard of public duty and conviction, for whom gold has had no seduction, the prize of well-deserved titles even no charm : a man strong in his manhood to the last, who passes from the great arena amid the acclamation, not of a party, but of his country, not of a nation, but of the world ! Young men, here are examples of how to live as men. I pray you follow them. Be true to self, to truth, to duty, to God. Follow the highest, and be content with nothing less. And in the dark and difficult hour, remember there is one who is our Helper, the Christ, who has been the strength of every noble life, the pattern of every truly

great one : and it is He who has told us that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses, but in the limitation of his wants and the reality of his faith in God.

GAMBLING

GAMBLING.

OF all the many forms of vice and sin which spring from a misuse of money, gambling is the worst, and is the most destructive of personal manliness and national integrity and honour.

No one can doubt the prevalence of gambling in our modern life. In the eighteenth century gambling was carried to so great a length that men literally betted on everything, and Horace Walpole tells a story of a man who was taken ill in a tavern, where-upon odds were instantly given on the chance of his recovery, and the spectators refused to send for a doctor because it might prejudice the betting. We have only to recall the life of Charles Fox, or to recollect how many great families have been broken up and dishonoured by gaming follies in the last hundred years, to have a tolerably correct picture of the devastating force of this curse in our national life.

Has the curse spent itself? Are things much better to-day? Any person capable of forming a judgment will reply that gambling is indeed more decorously conducted, but it is even more prevalent in the nineteenth than the eighteenth century. Then

the evil was after all pretty much confined to certain sections of society: now it is universal. Does any week pass without its record of embezzlement, dishonour, and suicide as the result of what is euphemistically termed "rash speculation"? Princes and servant girls alike gamble: and apprentices and clerks must needs have their bets. The gaols are full of men whose first step in felony was the eagerness to make money without work. Every prison chaplain can give you scores of instances of well-born youths, and honoured public servants, who entered on the road to embezzlement by a bet upon a horse, or "rash speculation on the Stock Exchange." It would be easy enough to give facts, and plenty of them, but there is no need. The most casual student of life cannot help perceiving the prevalence of the vice.

Now, what is gambling? Let Herbert Spencer define it for us: "*Gambling is a kind of action by which pleasure is obtained at the cost of pain to another. It affords no equivalent to the general good: the happiness of the winner implies the misery of the loser.*"

That is a succinct and admirable description, and is worth analysis.

Look at it. Gambling affords no equivalent to the general good. Now the desire to possess money is a natural and not a pernicious desire. Let us again remember that it is not money, but the love of money, which is the root of all evil. Moreover no one denies that money is capable of doing many things to bless human life. If money be a means to an end, and that

end a high one, it is well. If it be fairly and justly earned by perseverance and exertion, it should be enjoyed ; it is only when it becomes an end in itself, when it is sought for with avarice, and used with parsimony, when it is gained by cruel and dishonourable methods and squandered in self-indulgence, that it becomes an evil and an element of corruption. Christ does not condemn the possession of money, but the bad use of money ; not riches, but the haste to be rich and the trust in riches, and the Christian doctrine of money is thus an eminently sane and noble doctrine.

The two things to be remembered, then, are first to get money by honourable means ; and, second, that any possession or use of money which does not contribute to the common social good is infamous and evil. You must afford an equivalent to the common good. If I have built a house, society has had its money's worth in the labour of my hands and the ingenuity of my brain. If my money is mine as the result of something done, some contribution to the general welfare, something added to the common store on which society lives, I have fulfilled the obligation which its possession imposes. And the great revolutions which have shattered societies and overthrown empires have always sprung from wrong ways of getting money and irreligious uses of it. It is only when property recollects its privileges, and forgets its responsibilities, that the "Have-nots" rise up against the "Have-alls," and the guillotine and bayonet wrest

from guilty hands the gains of which they have proved themselves unworthy.

Now let this doctrine be applied to gambling, and a child can see that it stands condemned. Does the gambler contribute any thing to the common good? On the contrary, he takes that which he has done nothing whatever to earn. On his own confession, luck and not work is his tutelar deity. What he puts in his pocket is directly taken out of the pocket of some one else. He has neither thought nor laboured; he has contributed nothing whatever to the store of human intelligence or material wealth; he has built nothing, written nothing, *done* nothing; he has simply committed a felony upon the common purse of society.

Or apply the other part of Herbert Spencer's definition, and how does it work out? What is gambling but a pleasure obtained at the direct price of pain to another? In your gain how many have lost? To fill your pocket, how many are ruined? Think of the loser, and then you will see what gambling is. Think of the youth who has robbed his master's till to replenish your pocket; the wife and children brought to shame by the folly of the husband who contributed to your good fortune; the suicide, from whose purse was taken the gold which fills yours; the tears, and wrong, and anguish: the humiliation, and poverty, and shame: the outcast, dishonoured, and discredited men and women who also serve your Baal-god of Luck, and wail and wring their hands

in ineffectual lamentation, while you rejoice in your ill-gotten gain. By whatever name you choose to call your act, it is nothing else but theft with the prison dress off, for the gambler is a thief in heart, who thrives by the loss of others, and is therefore a pest and peril to society.

But let us be a little more particular. What are the forms of gambling among us to-day? First of all there is betting on games of chance. If you want to see what that means, go to Monte Carlo. Nothing there impressed me so much as the utter vulgarity and the degradation of the spectacle. No one pretends that it is a game of skill which is played there. It is pure chance, and the one object is to promote excitement and to win money. Every now and again some ingenious idiot goes to Monte Carlo with some infallible system for breaking the bank—the bank always breaks him! The best thing that can happen to the man who goes there is to lose at once, and lose all he can, and go away disgusted. The man who succeeds always goes on to the bitter end. There in that loveliest spot of Europe, where Nature has wrought with her finest magic, where turquoise sea and balmy air and exquisite verdure make a paradise, man has created a hell by his cupidity. Day by day at those infernal tables youth and age, manhood and womanhood, gather together, and with one inevitable result. For these victims of a hideous fascination Nature has no charm, and the exquisite beauty of the landscape has no meaning. The one

thing they see is the fatal gleam of gold. There goes the youth fresh from Eton to try his luck ; there bride and bridegroom soil the first hours of married life with a cruel greed ; there also is the adventurer, who has been expelled from every State of Europe, and knows half its prisons ; the man who has made his money by the toil of years, and loses it in as many hours as it took years to win it ; the old and the young, the profligate and the pure, the gaol-bird and the youth who would feel dishonour like a wound, all rubbing shoulders in promiscuous intimacy at the thronged altar of this demon—Cupidity. And every now and again a pistol-shot rings somewhere in the gardens ; but no one stops playing, or marks the miserable wretch who has rushed out to his doom. The stain of the suicide's blood is removed, and the players go on playing. Duty, love, humanity, have no place there, and if St. Theresà was right when she said the devil was an unhappy creature who could not love, what place is more like hell in this world than Monte Carlo ? There you see gambling in its worst form, in its most flagrant aspect, and it is an incredible disgrace to a Continent calling itself Christian that it has not long ago, by the confederate action of its various nations, swept away that which is a plague-spot of a widely radiating and infinite corruption for the whole civilized world.

Then we have betting upon horses, on sports, and games of skill, which is by far the most common form of gambling in Great Britain. We are told that the

racecourse is a national institution, and that men go to races for the love of a noble sport, and not to make money. If men go to races for the sake of seeing the horses run, why, then, do they bet? If it is the race which attracts them, why are they not content with the race? And if it be the race alone which is of supreme importance, and which appeals to a natural and healthy love of sport in Englishmen, why is it that all the newspapers, with some few honourable exceptions, publish betting odds, and inflame the public mind for weeks before a great race with all sorts of tips from sporting prophets?

I want you to understand that, in speaking of turf-gambling, so far as I know I am speaking of plain and unvarnished facts, and that I do not go to what is called the Puritanic and Pharisaic school of writers for my information. Charles Dickens was not a Puritanic or a Pharisaic writer, was he? Read what he has to say upon Doncaster races as he saw them. George Eliot was not a Puritanic or a Pharisaic writer: read her description of the gambling tables which you will find in "Daniel Deronda." Robert Louis Stevenson and Thomas Hardy are novelists who have never been accused of being Puritanic or Pharisaic. Two of the most extraordinary and powerful chapters in the greatest books of these great artists are chapters which describe what Stevenson deliberately describes as "the disgusting vice of gambling."* And the daily papers are not over-

* The chapter of Hardy thus referred to is the seventh of

Puritanic or Pharisaic ;they simply chronicle the time. Yet even the Press has become frightened at last by the horrible growth of cupidity which is being fostered and cultivated by the less legitimate and more unscrupulous forms of journalism. Or, if you do not care to take evidence of this kind, go and observe for yourselves. Look at the sort of faces that one sees on the race-course, the bestial, the foxy, the degraded. Travel in the same railway-carriage with habitual gamblers, and hear what their talk is like. I stayed, some time ago, in one of the fairest of English cathedral cities. My friend, who is one of the broadest minded and most tolerant of men, looking at the broad stretch of green beyond the city wall, said : "In a few weeks that turf will be covered with the scum of the earth, with faces which haunt you afterwards like a dream of hell." Is that strong language? It is no stronger than the language which Charles Dickens used about Doncaster racecourse. I myself have known such mad debauches after races, such diabolical impurities, that they are unnameable, for the gambling passion is the most insensate of all passions, and not only does it more than any other render the heart callous—it does not end with itself, but incites into diabolical activity every lust and passion of an unscrupulous depravity.

the Third Book of *The Return of the Native*, one of the most impressive pieces of writing in the whole range of modern fiction. In Stevenson's *Wrecker* the subject finds equally trenchant treatment.

A third form of gambling is that which is connected with the Stock Exchange. Let us be quite clear as to what we mean. No one condemns all brokers or their trade. There are many honourable, just, and pious men on the Stock Exchange. The Exchange is a necessity: it is the great ganglion in which the nerves of the business world meet, and commerce could not exist without it. To buy stock and pay for it is a perfectly legitimate transaction; to buy large quantities of stock nominally, *without money to pay for them*, but in the hope that such stock will rise in value, is gambling. You have but to look over your newspaper to see what I mean. This is the sort of thing—the advertisements which seduce the foolish.

“A gentleman from 1st to 16th September netted £637 15s. from a cover of £50, by dealing in and out quickly.” One feels he would like to know that gentleman. We should like to shake hands with him. Such a man ought at least to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Government should keep its eye on him; he might liquidate the National Debt for them.

Or listen again. Another syndicate with a well-known Baronet as chairman advertises thus—“Very often £10 produces £50 in one day. Syndicates opened daily. A delightful system which enables competitors to speculate in shares of every kind without risk.” It strikes one as a very curious thing that if these glowing promises can be fulfilled, brokers should take so much pains to get the public to be

"competitors." How benevolent they must be ! How generous of them to go about the world offering people fortunes at the rate of £50 per day, and £637 per fortnight, and all without risk too !

Do the brokers themselves put their own money into these delightful "systems" ? Not they. Their plan is to live out of you, and it is a truly delightful system—for them, because they are safe whoever gains or loses. If they were honest, they would put at the end of their advertisement, "N.B.—If you want to get rich, don't send your money to me : if you want me to get rich, send it." The whole thing is one vast organized fraud—bare-faced, thievish, ungarnished fraud. These are the spiders, the public are the flies ; and the man who walks into the parlour of the speculative broker is likely never to come out again till he is stripped of the uttermost farthing. Well might Baron Huddleston say, "A more disgraceful and discreditable system of gambling does not exist in the world. Play at Monte Carlo is respectable compared with the gambling carried on in the courts and alleys of the city of London."

There are many other forms of gambling equally common, though not equally pernicious. Raffling at bazaars is one of these. The Church must have clean hands on this subject. If no other harm is done by raffling, it debases the moral coinage, and it makes it easy for men to go further, who may afterwards reproach the Church as the cause of their ruin. The Church may as well take up the right position on this

matter first as last, for the new spirit is against it, and if Herbert Spencer can condemn it, the Church should not hesitate to renounce the custom.

I have thus hastily sketched the broad grounds of the subject: I may conclude by giving a few reasons why all people who have any care for character or morality should join the crusade against gambling in all its forms.

1. Any form of gambling unsettles the mind. No youth who once begins to burn with the ardour of the gambler will ever be of much use in the common business of life. He will live in a world of unwholesome excitement, which will gradually destroy all faculty for honest, simple work. Every employer of labour knows this, and there is not a merchant in London who would not give the preference in his office to the youth who knew nothing of the turf and the "tape." It applies, of course, still more seriously to pursuits in which any degree of intellectual concentration is needed. It is simply impossible for the man who is agitated by the hopes and fears of the gambler to make any sort of progress in intellectual pursuits.

2. Gambling is an abuse of the natural pleasure of possession, and inevitably destroys that pleasure. To get money without work is always a perilous thing. We see this often enough in the case of the father who founds a fortune, and the spendthrift son who scatters it. To get money by gambling is really to lose all sense of pleasure or value in the possession of

money, and it can only be gained by the sacrifice of the best qualities of manhood.

3. The sure result of gambling is that self-respect is destroyed. The gambler becomes morally callous, and the distinction between right and wrong becomes obliterated in him. "Before man made us citizens," says Russell Lowell, "great nature made us men." Our first duty is to ourselves: to see to it that we obey our sense of right, and take no counsel from society on the questions that affect right conduct. But if I do that, the man who lives by turf-transactions might say, I should starve. Starve, then: a good conscience is better than fulness of bread. Nothing is worth a crime, and it is better to enter into eternal life maimed and halt, than to live in the unresting hell of an accusing conscience. But the other fellows in the office would laugh at me, and call me a fantastic idealist! No doubt. Men called Christ worse names than that, and there never was a great man who has not been ridiculed. We admire in history and biography the men who have cast everything away for a cause, a principle, a conviction: let us not admire only, but emulate. There is no particular necessity that we should live; but if we are to live it is our first duty to live as honest men. And whatever may be our position in life, we can live as men who reverence themselves, and until we do so there will be neither peace for our own hearts, nor reform for society.

4. Because self-respect is a man's chief treasure,

any habit that destroys self-respect must needs be an immoral act. There is such a thing as the stewardship of money, and we shall have to account to God for the way in which every shilling of our money was acquired or spent. The man of noble nature faces this responsibility, and seeks to use his money for the common good. The man who gambles sins against the decalogue which is graven on his own conscience ; he does what is really a mean act, and in the light of the suffering which he might help, and the daily need there is for those who have means to assist in helping those philanthropic enterprises which seek to heal our great social sores, his act is a treachery of the worst kind against society.

5. And lastly, gambling is utterly foolish. I have assumed in what I have said, that if you gamble you will win. As a matter of fact you will not win. Who really makes money on a race? Sir George Chetwynd is a competent racing authority, and he says that the outsider never does. What does the miserable youth devouring the *Sporting Times* in a dingy city office know about horses? He may know a cab-horse when he sees one, and be able to discover by his own unaided judgment that it is not a dray-horse, but that is about all. He probably could not distinguish a hock from a flank if his life depended on it. The men who make money on horses are men who have studied the subject all their lives, as a professor studies chemistry or a surgeon anatomy, and against their skill and knowledge the outsider has no chance. And

it is the same on the Stock Exchange. The only man who makes money is the man behind the scenes, and often enough he comes to grief. An old broker told a friend of mine that if he wanted really to make money, he had better buy Consols at two and three quarters per cent., and he would guarantee that in twenty years' time he would be better off than if he had speculated through the most honest and competent broker in London. Therefore I say to any one who is tempted to gambling in any of its forms, My brother, you are not only about to do an immoral and corrupting thing, but you are going to make a fool of yourself. If you want to enjoy money and what it can buy you, make it honestly. Depend upon it the sporting prophet could not help you even if he would. There is another prophet of more ancient date, called Isaiah, who is better worth attention. Hear him: "Ye that prepare a table for Fortune and fill up mixed wine unto destiny, I will destine you to the sword." Listen to him: you will find him worth listening to. And if you want the genuine "straight tip," the real revelation of the unknown which may help you, the truly wise and inspired word on which you may safely base your trust, here it is: "*What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*"

THE EMPTY MIND

THE EMPTY MIND.

PICTURE to yourself a man who, having been delivered from evil, falls into yet worse evil, because he has not learned to love goodness. The devil has passed out of the man—some torturing and tormenting devil of evil passion or unclean imagination—and the House of the Mind is swept and garnished. No one can any longer accuse him of complicity with sin ; every sign of the old revels is swept away. The windows are open, the clean air blows through the rooms, and everywhere there is stainless cleanliness, painful purity, laborious order. But there is no one in the rooms and that is why the doors and windows stand open to the air. There is no sound of industry, no movement of busy feet, no duty in progress of performance, no living aim that calls forth living energy ; all is vacant, silent, deserted. Then the evil spirit comes back again and reconnoitres the empty house. He approaches with stealth because he expects resistance, but he finds none. There is no helmed and sworded angel of goodness to guard the doors, no garrison of high and dutiful thoughts to defend the threshold ; and, seeing this, he beckons to himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and take possession. They enter, and they dwell

there, to be no more cast out, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

This is the parable of the Empty Mind, and it has a special and searching application to the life of youth. Can we picture the youth whom it describes? Most probably he is a youth well brought up, who has had many advantages. He may have known something of deceit and folly ; he may have touched the fringe of evil and recoiled from it in disgust, so that its effect has been to beget in him a fastidious sense of propriety. Or he may have stood aloof altogether from the ungodly, for the cardinal point of the story is not so much that his heart once had an evil inmate as that it is now destitute of any inmate at all. In other words, his life has no interests. He knows no ardour of moral or intellectual aim ; he is vapid, idle, unoccupied, indifferent. A vast world, full of strenuous struggle, beats out its stormy music round him, but he does not hear it nor regard it. He shares no social movement, has no civic passion, has even no keen and sufficing personal aims. There are books in the world that sum up the finest thoughts of the greatest men, but he does not read them. There are the worlds of art and music, but he has thought neither worth his study. There are men who are giving the whole strength of their life to the public good, but he does not so much as understand their way of looking at things. There are multitudes of men, both in the past and present, who have found life an absorbing joy, who have delighted in its manifold sensations, its

strange chances, its measureless opportunities ; but he has never felt what this means, and knows nothing of the passion of living. He goes on his dead level of necessary work without a moment's sense of how vast and vivid a world he lives in. He is simply not interested in anything ; and can there be a more apt and telling description of such a youth than this of the house which is swept and garnished, but empty : very proper in its irritating neatness, but unpeopled ?

An American author has spoken of certain "terribly clean houses," which are only to be regarded with a sense of revulsion, and has thanked God that the kind Providence which watches over children, "takes care that very few are lodged in these alarming temples of cleanliness." We have known such houses, and it has not only been their painful propriety, but their lack of interest which has oppressed us. They have contained no books, no music, no pictures, no touch of taste, by which we have known that the arts which do most to refine life have been despised. On the other hand, we have known houses quite humble, quite simple, and yet there has been an atmosphere in them which has revealed a soul. I was a guest once at a house in quite a poor street, with the most dismal of outlooks. There were fifty houses all in a row, and all alike ; but this house, how different ! There were books everywhere, and all good—books in the passages, books in the closets, books in every room ; and one forgot that the house was small and the outlook dismal, because he was keenly conscious

that it was a true temple of the Mind. It was more than that, for the man who lived there worked all day in an arduous business, and gave up his evenings to help and instruct the poor ; and if the devil had knocked at his door, he could not have got in for the books ! And this is precisely the point of this parable : the devil does not knock at the door of the busy man, but of the idle man. It is the empty mind which he claims, and he enters in and dwells there.

My observation goes to prove that almost all the sins of youth may be traced to the empty mind. I have little fear for the youth who plunges into some congenial study, or takes up some mechanical or scientific hobby as soon as the day's business is over. In such work he will find security from the assaults of the flesh and the devil. Matthew Arnold has finely described how all the splendid sordidness and sensuality of Rome failed to touch the Oriental peoples whom Rome subdued and governed :—

The East bowed low before the blast,
In patient, deep disdain :
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

And so the tumult of the sensual world passes harmlessly over the youth whose mind is quickened with noble sympathies, and thrills with the passion and the joy of thought. And if I fear little for the youth who lives the intellectual life, I fear still less for him who early feels and admits the social obligations of life and does what many a fine-hearted young fellow

is doing—gives up his leisure to teach the children in a night-school, or to bring, in some cognate way, a gleam of hope and interest into the lives of the forgotten and the unregarded. But when I see a youth who seems to have no special aims of his own, who does not read, does not care for art or music or politics or athletics, does not take an interest in any one of the great causes which agitate the best men, and to which the noblest dedicate their lives—for such a youth I do fear. It is he who is the victim of the torturing imagination, and becomes the prey of the unclean spirit.

I was in a beautiful Yorkshire town the other day. It stands upon the river Tees, which flows with a very rapid current and a great volume of water at that particular point. I learned that all the sewage of the town was poured into the river, and I suggested that it must be a bad thing for the health of the place. They told me, No ; the health of the place was excellent. Were there no exhalations from the river? None. And how was that? Simply because the volume of water was so strong and rapid that a mile away from the town there was no trace of sewage deposit ; it had been churned and beaten into extinction by the violent current which raced over the rocky bed. In the same way busy minds rid themselves of evil thoughts—the sewage of the mind. They have no time for them, and such thoughts have no power to germinate disease in them. The thought comes, and that cannot be helped ; but it is no sooner

there than it is swept away before the rush of other and better thoughts. We may be sure that the one way of overcoming impure thoughts, suggestions, and imaginations, is by filling the mind with the contrary things, and so bringing every imagination into obedience to the captivity of Christ.

A complaint which I have often heard upon the lips of young men who have been tortured by the unclean spirit has been : " Why does not God keep me pure ? Why should we suffer for the sins our forefathers have committed ? Why does God permit us to have within ourselves the passions that would destroy us ? " The plain answer to these questions is, that life is discipline, and these things are involved in the discipline. We are not automata, and therefore God has no power to keep us pure. We can dispose of ourselves, and if we are to be pure it must be by a conscious effort of the will, and by resolute endeavour. Is not this far better for us than any state of things could be by which we were coddled into purity by a Power that left us no chance of personal endeavour ? There is nothing clearer in the marvellous story of evolution than that what have seemed to be the calamities of life are its real blessings. Our passions are given us that we may overcome them, and become men in the struggle. They are like the weights and bars of the gymnasium, against which we must measure ourselves at the price of sweat and effort if we are to develop our muscles. Instead of blaming God for a mismanaged world, we should blame our-

selves ; and instead of puling feeble blasphemies about it being God's business to keep us pure, we should summon all our powers for our own deliverance.

There can be no doubt, however, that some people find it much easier to be good than others. There is a basis of real truth in the saying of Cotter Morison, who may be taken as the sanest and fairest prophet of agnosticism, that "The genuine saint is a moral genius of a peculiar kind ; he is born, not made. You must have a very fine and peculiar organization to be a true Christian. A Sister Agnes or Mother Margaret take to vital religion with the spontaneous affinity that Mozart took to music, Newton to mathematics, and Keats to poetry. Religious genius, in its highest form, is as rare, perhaps more rare, than genius in any other form ; and exalted piety is as unattainable to the common herd as exalted poetry." But the question is, who are the common herd ? Certainly not the poor, the ill-educated, the drudges of society exclusively, for the poor and ill-educated have often shown a truer genius for religion than the cultured and the wealthy. Indeed, St. Paul goes further, and says that there were not many wise and mighty who received his message ; and of Christ it was said that the common people heard Him gladly. Moreover, Mr. Morison throws away his case when he says further : "Ardent love, gratitude and veneration for Christ, when kindled, are able to snap the chains of habit, and sometimes to prevent their being welded

together again." There is the remedy ; this is the point at which God touches the problem. Let a youth get a vivid sense of the friendship of Christ, let ardent love, gratitude, and veneration for Christ be kindled in him, and he will find he has a power at his command which will effectually snap all the chains of evil habit, and which, if not suffered to diminish, will also prevent them ever being welded together again. And this passion for Christ can be kindled in any one. It needs no special genius for religion to make it possible. If it be kindled in a man on whom heredity has worked its worst, he will have a harder fight to live righteously than a man blessed with calm blood and temperate imagination will have ; but so much the greater is the victory, and so much the finer the spiritual genius which will be evolved in him. Some of the noblest heroes of religion have been precisely the men in whom the potentialities of vice were strongest. It is the rankest soil which, under cultivation, produces the finest crop. Our great work is to civilize our souls, to redeem them from spiritual barbarism, to deflect our passions into right courses, and we shall find, as multitudes before us have found, that

A Power is with us in the night
Which made the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone.

Upon this point Harriet Martineau meets us with a true word : she says : "Who would ever stir a finger, if only on condition of being guaranteed

against oversights, misinformation, mistakes, ignorance, loss, and danger?" For it is of the very nature of difficulty and peril to develop in us energy and courage. We must have battlefields if we are to be true soldiers of Jesus Christ. And be sure of it, God will make no mistakes in His judgment of us, and our hereditary tendencies will receive full allowance. I know men who are continually disappointing me by some sudden outbreak of temper, or vulgarity, or intolerance; but when I reflect on the sort of physical frame their soul is condemned to live in, the stream of hereditary tendency they have had to conquer, I am not surprised that they are imperfect Christians: I am only thankful that they are not more imperfect. When nature obviously designed a man for a blackguard, it is a triumph of grace that he becomes a very moderate Christian. A low state of grace in some men means a great deal more than a high state in others, who have had the foundation of hereditary amiability and good morals to build upon. The one demand of God is that we should live the best life we know, according to our several ability.

The one true principle of defence, then, is not merely to cleanse the heart of evil, but to garrison it with good, so that there shall be no room for evil in it. Many men think the moral battle ended when they have overcome a single bad habit. You were intemperate, now you are sober; you knew the paths of folly, now you avoid them; you were criminally spendthrift, now you are frugal and almost parsi-

monious ; you deserve credit for your conquest, but it would be folly to suppose that it is final. It is not enough to tell me what you are not : tell me what you are. You may be, as Tennyson has put it, " icily regular, faultily faultless, splendidly null." You may avoid vice, and yet have no virtues ; be free of evil, and yet have no love of goodness. When the weeds are cleared from the soil, the husbandman's work is only begun ; you may have cleared the weeds, but you have yet to sow the good seed. Not to be vicious is a great thing, but it is not virtue ; to be virtuous you must love virtue, and fill your mind with so great a crowd of good thoughts that there is no room for evil ones.

A well-known literary man told me the following story. Years ago he was master of a school in the Far West, and was troubled because his boys wasted all their leisure in the reading of " dime novels." Thereupon he made a bargain with them. For a month he read to them, after school hours, the best works of Scott and Dickens, and at the end of the month gave them their choice—to go back to the " dime novel " and give up Scott, or take Scott and burn the " dime novel." With one accord the boys voted a bonfire of their " dime novels." Why did those boys no longer care for the pernicious rubbish that had once fascinated them ? Because a higher fascination had possessed them. And for us, as for them, there is no other method of escape from the tyranny of low and base thoughts. We overcome.

evil, not merely by resisting it, but by replacing it. We do not only pull down the slum—we build the model dwelling. We are not content to drain the marsh, we cultivate it. The moment a higher fascination falls upon the mind, the lower fascination is disarmed and dispelled.

The parable of the Empty Mind was spoken by the greatest of all Teachers, and the fascination which will effectually keep us from evil is the supreme fascination of Christ. I do not say that it is wise or desirable to emulate the Catholic, and keep a crucifix at the bedside, that your first and last glances day by day may rest upon that sublime figure of sorrow ; but I do say, let no day open when your eyes are not lifted to that visionary Christ, no day close when your soul does not seek communion with that Divine soul. I do not wish to see at our street corners, and in the green shadows of our country roads, as one sees in Switzerland and Italy, the little shrine that dumbly calls us to prayer, the uplifted figure of the crucifix that touches us to nobler thoughts ; but I do say, learn, even amid the tumult and seductions of the streets, to lift your eyes toward that quiet heaven, where all our loud contentions are lost, and are of no account. Let the chambers of the heart be hung with the unfading pictures of the Divinest life ; let good thoughts be the sacred presences that fill it and pervade it ; let the music of eternal wisdom echo there, and then you will be equally secure against the follies of idleness and the visions of sin. In the

ancient legends of the Church the evil spirit always flees at the name of Christ or the sign of the Cross. So it is true, not in legend but in fact, that when a man bears the tokens of a higher tenancy, the armies of evil withdraw, and the siege of Mansoul is raised. We all of us know what it is to be scourged by evil thoughts, to be moved by impulses which we despise and loathe, even while we dally with them. But if we examine ourselves with the least sincerity, we shall know that such impulses come only when the heart is vacant, the mind unoccupied, the effort and aim of life relaxed. It is our wisdom, therefore, never to leave the door of the mind ajar, the portal unguarded. This is the plain and simple moral of the parable of the Empty Mind, and to master this lesson will mean more than much knowledge learned from books, and much wisdom gathered from the bitter fields of experience, in laborious remorse for folly: folly which men have committed through ignorance of self, and of those laws by which the soul thrives and is defended.

PATRIOTISM AND THE CIVIC CALL

PATRIOTISM AND THE CIVIC CALL.

I SHALL go back many centuries to the times of Nehemiah to learn the lesson of patriotism ; and I do so for two reasons. The first is that I wish to suggest what is constantly forgotten—that the Bible is literature, and of the noblest order. The Bible has been described as a book very much talked about, but very little read. I wish to suggest to the youth of candid temper that, quite apart from any question of authority or religion, there is no other book so well worth reading, and that there are few stories in the world of more delightful humour or more enduring charm than the story of Nehemiah.

The second reason is, that Nehemiah was one of the purest patriots who ever lived. There are many elements which combine to make him one of the most striking and heroic figures in history. To begin with, he is a courtier, and it is rare that great social reformers come from the softened air of courts, whose chief boast is, as a famous English statesman once put it, a sustained and stately splendour. We can understand a patriot being nursed on the rough bosom of the democracy, learning in suffering what he teaches in song or fiery speech, drawing his strength from a

hundred memories of the sorrows of his lot, and of those who share it, goaded at last by the spectacle of the wrong he endures and shares into defiance of tradition, and final revolt against society. The man who has been hunted by the Austrian may well become an impassioned leader of Italian revolution ; the man who has been made to row with galley-slaves may well grow into a John Knox, whose lips shall utter the trumpet-cry of freedom for a nation. "They may sit," as Sir Thomas Brown finely puts it, "in the orchestra and noblest seats of Heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory." They sit there as by native right. From the womb of such tragedies we expect the hero.

But in Nehemiah we have a religious hero and great patriot of quite another type. He is a man of God, and yet a man of the world ; an astute statesman, and yet a man who dare not lie ; a man who is as profoundly pious as he is profoundly politic. We judge by one suggestion of his early history that he was a man of even cheerful gaiety, in whose company the king delighted ; and, among all the improbabilities of history, is there a greater than that a man who could please a tyrant could also be capable of the strenuous patriotism by which a nation is delivered, and a great city recovers her long-lost freedom ? Yet this was the part that Nehemiah played, and the record of his deeds is one of the noblest chronicles of history.

Now, substantially, though for us there are neither

courts nor kingly favours, we may be said to stand pretty much where Nehemiah did. We are not the victims of any intolerable wrong. Most of us have been nurtured in relative ease of circumstance, and have no keen personal reason for quarrelling with the world. We have not indeed "fed on the roses and lain on the lilies of life," but neither has our bread been made bitter with tears, nor our lot poisoned by a tyrannous injustice. And for that reason we share with Nehemiah the most fatal of all temptations—to let well alone, to persuade ourselves that all's right with the world because it goes not so very ill with us, to be content with a state of things by which we do not suffer, and forget the lot of those whose days are built out of sorrow, and whose best hope is the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. I need not say that he who succumbs to this temptation can never live anything but a selfish and ignoble life. The first element of any noble life is that "large and liberal discontent" which looks beyond the personal lot, and feels with and strives for the community. There is no form of wickedness more prevalent than the smug, complacent wickedness of being content with things as they are, simply because we do not suffer by them. The men who are the despair at once of the Christian and the statesman are those who are so absorbed in personal aims and satisfactions that they cannot be made to understand their relation to society, nor brought to feel for the sorrows of the community. Consider how easy it

would have been for Nehemiah to have fallen into this stagnant somnolence of conscience, to have enjoyed the splendour of his environment and the emoluments of his office ; and then you will be the better able to measure the greatness of soul which forgot all this in thinking of the sorrows of his oppressed countrymen. There are so many reformers who have everything to gain and nothing to lose by their reforms, that it is a refreshing and invigorating novelty to meet a man who has all to lose and nothing to gain ; for such a man is the type of that fine disinterestedness which is at once the rarest and highest of all human virtues.

I take it, then, that disinterestedness is the chief note and essential quality of any manly patriotism. If you possess privileges which are denied to others, that is the very reason why you should be unhappy till you have shared them with the less favoured. Reforms and revolutions have too often appealed only to the cupidity of the people, and for that reason they have miserably failed. The only reform which endures is that which enlists the force of disinterestedness ; the only reformers who are likely to move men deeply are those who manifestly lose all and gain nothing by their victories. Nehemiah was one of these. He would not even take the stipend which attached to his position as governor of Jerusalem, and a man who will not take a stipend is a very unusual person. He said simply, "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord," for he dared not take money from the poverty of his countrymen, even

when it was his legitimate reward. He was determined to do all that he did for nothing, and people of that order are so rare that it is possible to pass through a long life and never meet a single specimen. Yet when the great reform of reforms comes, which sets up Christ's true kingdom on the earth, it will be by virtue of this spirit, and this alone, that it will be triumphant. Men will say, "The things that were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ"! They will recognise that the world is well lost for truth and duty. They will ask for no heaven: they will be content that they open the gates of the kingdom to others.

Born to be wasted, even so,
And doomed to fail and lift no voice,
Yet not unblest, because I know
So many other souls rejoice.

That was the spirit of Nehemiah, and it was by virtue of that spirit that a true patriotism performs its heroisms.

But it is time that we asked, What is patriotism? It is essentially one thing: the losing of personal in public aims; the right conception of the community, and of our duty to the community; the passion for the gain of the community at the price, if needs be, of our own personal loss. Much that passes for patriotism is not patriotism at all, simply because it does not fulfil these conditions. Love of country is not necessarily patriotism; it may be simply a selfish insularity of sentiment. Pride in country is not

patriotism ; it may be, and often is, a form of barbaric insolence and vanity. A true patriotism is a passion for humanity, and such a passion is of slow growth, because it is the last and finest development of manhood. There inevitably comes an hour when the man of really noble nature finds that his powers of love, which have hitherto exhausted themselves on individuals, go out in a passion for the race itself, and that is patriotism in its one authentic and divine form. Such an hour came in the life of Christ, when He said that henceforth they were His brethren and sisters who did the will of God, and in that hour I think Christ entered on perfect manhood. He had been a perfect child and a perfect youth already in His various contact with men. But in every one who really grows, all the noble hopes and passions of manhood settle in mature life into one greater passion, the passion for the race. Many never feel that passion, but those who do never lose it. It is the cry of the French revolutionists on the barricades, when they forget the lesser issue in the larger, and shout not *Vive la France*, but *Vive l'humanité*. It is this passion which filled the heart of Nehemiah and made him leave the king's court to take up the hard and misunderstood task of redeeming his ungrateful countrymen. It is this passion which every youth must share who would fain live a noble and heroic life ; for until that passion consecrates us, the crown and fulness of manhood are forevermore denied us.

But in such a patriotism as this there is another

element, which is admirably indicated in Nehemiah's saying, "So will not I, because of the fear of the Lord." A true patriotism measures all things by a divine standard, and acts with the sense of a divine captaincy. And what does this mean? Does it mean that Nehemiah was afraid of God, afraid of the scourge of God, afraid of the anger of God? Does it mean that he would gladly have done otherwise, but that the fear of God was a whip laid upon his back, a terror which urged and subdued his soul? It is but too true that this is all that the fear of God means to many men. They are virtuous by compulsion, not by choice. They are honest not for love of honesty, but because honesty is the best policy: and of all mean proverbs this is the meanest and most contemptible. Withdraw heaven, and they would flout goodness to her face; withdraw hell, and they would instantly crowd to the banners of a shameless vice. Be sure of it no soul was ever heroic on such terms as these, and the man for whom rewards and punishments are the sole incentives to virtue is never really virtuous. What he calls his virtue is something more truly vicious than vice itself.

But what the fear of God does mean is the clear perception of the eternal standards of right and wrong which God has given us, and the effort to reach them and obey them. We do fear to outrage these. We are afraid of sin, and this is a noble fear. And because we see what God has constituted right, we cannot rest till God's law of right is the law of society

of nations, and of the world. According to all human opinion, Nehemiah would have been perfectly right in taking pay for the labours of his governorship. But what about God's opinion? There was a higher court before which he constantly arraigned himself; there is a higher court before which we and all society are evermore arraigned. We have to judge ourselves not by the axioms of society, but by our own inward sense of right. There are many things which the world permits a man to do daily in business, and for which it has no blame; but that is only because the world's moral standard is debased. There are many customs and traditions of society which are so carefully disguised, so delicately undiscussed, so buttressed and upheld by convention, that no man openly questions them; yet they are absolutely wrong, and appear so the moment we venture to measure them by the measurement of God. Nehemiah did not order his life by the pattern of society, else he had never been a patriot. Nor can we be patriots if we are merely going to do what society expects and permits us to do. All nobleness of individual action or of national life is based on one thing alone—a supreme reverence for right, a supreme dread of wrong, and a scheme of conduct which is the outgrowth of these convictions.

But now let me suppose that we agree in these ideals, and have more or less of that clear and candid vision which sees things as they really are, and not as they appear through the coloured glass of tradition. We are quite able to perceive that courts are rotten,

commerce avaricious, churches foolish, blind, and belated. We know that law is not equity, for we have suffered by its injustice. We know that society is really organized on a pagan and not a Christian basis, for there is not a business-house in London on whose walls the Sermon on the Mount could be pasted, as a law of life, without calling for derision. We know that what is called common honesty is sadly uncommon, and that magnanimity such as Nehemiah's is the rarest of all virtues. After all, it does not require any very piercing vision to perceive these things, and it is easy enough to be scornful, and to cry with Walter Raleigh,—

Say to the Court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood ;
Say to the Church, it shows
What's good, but does no good.
If Church and Court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

But the question is, not do we see these things, but are we prepared to do anything to mend them? Nehemiah could have told us all about the miserable condition of society in Jerusalem without crossing the doorstep of the palace. Many men do that. They describe the state of modern society in very noble rhetoric, and then go home to dinner. They denounce avarice, and take all they can get. They paint the evils of the world and the imperfections of the Church with the keenest satire, and do nothing to remedy either. The great question is not, therefore, do we know what the fear of God means, but dare we act

upon it? Nehemiah acted on it, with certain memorable results which I may briefly recapitulate.

The first result of the fear of God on Nehemiah was that he feared nothing else. He was conspicuously sincere, and for that reason invincibly courageous. He tells us his story with a Bunyan-like realism and quaintness of humour which make it live before us like a record of yesterday. He is a good hater, and he gives us the clearest views of his enemies, and what he thought of them. He says, with delightful irony, that it grieved Sanballat and Tobiah exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. The advent of a man is always dreaded by the time-server and the coward, the weak and the dishonest. To make a knave like Sanballat uneasy is the best possible proof of the integrity of Nehemiah, and perhaps the worst reproach that lies against most of us is that we so seldom make the wicked unhappy by our speech and conduct. All that spite, all that envy, all that knavish astuteness, murderous intimidation, lying and misrepresentation can do to frighten Nehemiah is done; but not once is he dismayed. When they tell him that his work will be stopped by force, he simply gives his men swords as well as trowels, and goes on working. When they inform him that there is a plot for his assassination, and that he had better take refuge in the temple, he replies, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." And

thus from first to last he is superbly courageous because he is absolutely consecrated to his task, and, fearing God, he fears no one else.

This is not a moral for a tract: it is one of the prime facts of history which constantly recurs. We see it conspicuously illustrated in the Puritans. It might almost be said that their motto was, "We fear God, and no one else." They believed that they obeyed a call, and moved under the secret orders of a Divine Captain. And so, as Macaulay finely puts it, for them "death had lost its terrors, and pleasure its charms. Their palaces were houses not made with hands, their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and on priests, they looked down with contempt; for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand." What was it gave this strange body of men their power, and made them move like the glittering sword of God amid the demoralization of their times? It was the fear of God. They were filled with the awestruck sense of God's sovereignty, and from that came their passion for righteousness and liberty, their resoluteness and certainty of faith, and that sublime constancy and courage which displayed itself equally in the clamorous ardours of the battlefield and the yet more difficult equanimity of the martyr's triumph.

But in a true patriotism hope is needed as well

as courage : in fact, is not courage itself a valiant hope? Not to be afraid of your enemy means that your faith in your cause is so profound that fear is impossible. In this respect I know no finer parallel to Nehemiah than is found in the history of William the Silent, who was perhaps the greatest man of action that the whole movement of Protestantism ever produced. William, too, was the friend of kings, and himself, a great prince : astute and politic as well as devout and earnest : a single man launched upon an immense crusade, and sustained in it alone by his sense of responsibility to God. No man ever played a more difficult part, none ever manifested a finer equanimity of hope, or a courage of so calm and grave a quality. His words still ring across the world, as once they rang over the flooded plains of Holland, with the high note of an unconquerable faith in God and right. In the darkest hour of hours, when the cities of the Netherlands ran with blood, and one long wail of anguish came up from the stricken people, he can say "that the desired end will be reached if you hold fast your resolution, I feel to be absolutely certain." He says, again, "If God sees we do not lose our courage, He will assuredly help us." And, to quote one more saying, perhaps the greatest and most memorable of all, he replies with lofty enthusiasm to those who blame him : "You ask if I have entered into a firm treaty with any great king or potentate : to which I answer that before ever I took up the cause of the distressed

Christians in these provinces, I had entered into a close alliance with the King of kings, and I am firmly convinced that all who put their trust in Him shall be saved by His almighty hand." Noble words, yet not more noble than true! This is the true patriotism : it is an alliance with the King of kings to fight His battle on the earth, and he who shares that august alliance is more than conqueror, because he knows himself but the instrument of the conquests of God.

Young men, it is in such a spirit I would have you face the great future which is your inheritance. I think I am not mistaken when I say that England is entering on a new age which will be both high and difficult. There is a new spirit passing through the people. Politics are no longer regarded as a game in which "the pawns too often are sacrificed to the knights and castles." Civic ideals of almost unique magnificence are more and more taking hold of the public mind. Religion itself is animated by the new spirit, and men at last are seeing that a true piety is not the effort to save one's own soul alone, but to build up a community in which the souls of all shall be free to thrive in the common air of true justice, morality, and virtue. A new Puritanism has been born, which, without the harshness and sourness of the old Puritanism, has all its noble fire, all its living faith, all its emulous energy for the social welfare. Men are in earnest to-day. They are determined that the twentieth century shall not dawn in clouds

and confusion, but shall be bright with a real morning of hope for the disinherited and the forgotten. I call on you to share this higher patriotism, to be baptized into this new spirit, that you may be prepared for those infinite opportunities of social reconstruction which await you.

Patriotism is a large word: therefore let me remind you that the largest programme has its beginning, and the beginning may be small. To rebuild cities, to deliver provinces, to save nations, may seem to us so impossible a programme that our practical sense recoils from it as from a tissue of fascinating impossibilities. But nations are saved by individuals, and any man who nourishes great and heroic aims, and carries them out in his own sphere, is doing more than he can estimate to build up a better world and bring in a brighter day. You can at least say, when you are tyrannously urged to perform the deceits and dishonesties of business, "So will not I, because of the fear of the Lord." It is, at all events, possible for you to answer the corrupt comrade who would initiate you into infamous pleasures, or who mocks your high ideals with the foolish cynicism which youth mistakes for wit, or who invites you to a life as paltry and empty as his own, "So will not I, because of the fear of the Lord." The first thing that is implied in manliness is that you are yourself—not one of a number, confused and lost in a multitude—but a separate person, owing duties to yourself, and ready to fulfil them. This is precisely the meaning of the

word "hero" as the Greek used it ; a hero was a man, as distinguished from mankind. The great mass of people are undistinguished from mankind, and are afraid to be themselves. They do what others do, think what others think, and accept the axioms of society, without the smallest attempt to ascertain whether they are right or wrong. They are afraid of singularity, and that means that they are afraid of sincerity. For, says Carlyle, "if hero means a sincere man, why may not every one of us be a hero?" There is no reason, except that we are not sincere. The moment we begin to act upon our real convictions, to encourage within our minds the growth of real thoughts ; to ask, not what is popular, but what is right ; not what everybody does, but what we ought to do ; not how easily we can get through life, but how righteously—in that hour we become men. Nay, more, we become heroes, for we have become distinguished from the cowardly and unthinking, and are consecrated to reality. It is impossible that any one who lives in this spirit can live in vain. If, out of the thirty millions of people in Great Britain, there were but one million who would thus dare to be themselves, to look at the plain facts of life, and do their duty in scorn of consequence, there would be a general rebirth of manhood throughout society. It is because men do not look at the facts, and do not think for themselves, because they take it for granted that what every one seeks must be the thing best worth seeking, and the manner of life pursued by the majority must

needs be a tradition which may worthily be followed, that true patriotism is so rare among us, and the civic call so often falls on unregarding ears.

Let it be always remembered, then, that in the small matters of life and conduct, in those daily acts and impulses which make up the sum of what seems an insignificant career, you can so live as not to sacrifice your sincerity and sense of right, and in your growing sense of right you will find the elements out of which a true passion for the race may spring. Long since, when Oliver Wendell Holmes surveyed the state of society in his own country, he wrote :

God give us men ! A time like this demands
Great hearts, strong minds, true faith, and willing hands !
Men whom the lust of office does not kill :
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy :
Men who possess opinions and a will :
Men who have honour, men who will not lie.
For, while the rabble with their thumbworn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Wrangle in selfish strife, lo ! Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps.

Be you these men, for we and all the world need them as truly as America. Be it yours to be true patriots, building up the broken walls of an unhappy society, winning for the poor his rights, and wresting from the tyrant his spoils. A man may be religious—after a weak and narrow fashion—without being a patriot ; but he cannot be a patriot without being religious ; and the highest form of religion is also the highest patriotism.

**THE MINISTRY OF LEISURE
AND HOLIDAYS**

THE MINISTRY OF LEISURE AND HOLIDAYS.

THERE are two lines of Wordsworth's which have been much in my mind the last few days :—

Me this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires.

They are a confession that we may have too much leisure: that for even the best of us the absence of binding duties, even though they be drudgeries, is not wholesome. We do not like to admit this fact, but it is a fact, nevertheless, and is worth consideration.

Now we can all see that absolute drudgery is apt to kill the power of enjoyment in men. But too much leisure has a scarcely less mischievous effect. The man who has no positive duties to fulfil is like a river with no banks: the stream spreads itself abroad in stagnant pools and shallows, and never runs with a deep strong current, because it is never driven together by unyielding barriers. There is to me nothing more instructive than this confession of Wordsworth's. Measure the words and the man. He believes that he has a call to interpret Nature to his generation, and in this he is right. He nobly rejects the tempting prizes of life, because he will

be true to his mission. He retires from the great crowded centres of civilization, and seeks the healing silence and solitude of lakes and mountains. He is content to live with the utmost frugality, and thus to set an example of "plain living and high thinking." So far all is noble, right, admirable. But even Wordsworth suffered from having no positive duties to fulfil. Miss Martineau has said that he would have been a happier man if he had had some fixed and positive employment. He himself in these lines expresses the tediousness of too much leisure. The freedom is unfettered: it would be better, it would taste sweeter, if it knew the contrast of restraint. Chance desires weigh upon him, and the central purpose of life is apt to be forgotten. The fact is, we all need to have a Taskmaster. The best of us is not fitted for unlimited freedom. Obedience and the binding of our own will to definite tasks are necessary disciplines for us, reluctant as we may be to make so difficult an admission.

I write these sentences out of the heart, because I have felt their truth. I never go to the country without a passionate desire to stay there. I never leave the town without a burning resentment that it has kept me so long from green fields, and the stillness of the flowering summer. I feel that the natural life of man, the life which God meant man to live, is not in the city. I gain repose of soul and power of thought at once when I live with Nature. One of my holiday manias is to be always looking for some

quiet spot where I may build myself a cottage, and live henceforth "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." I have chosen half a dozen such places already : and herein I have not behaved so foolishly as I may appear to have done, for whenever the fog grips my throat in the city, and the endless rattle of the streets tears my nerves with pain, I retire in imagination to one of these earthly Paradises, and am restored. I have only to close my eyes, and the heather is purple at my feet, the loch lies bathed in sunshine, the wind blows through the pine-boughs, the gentle air passes over me like a caressing hand. But my cottage is not built yet. I see it plainly enough down the long avenue of years, with roses climbing over porch and window, and a stream rippling past the door ; but whenever I approach it, it melts into air, thin air. I am beginning to think it never will be built, and that those simple persons who gave me such excellent advice about the site, and drainage, and water, and who have expected to hear from me ever since, have spent their capacity for counsel in vain upon me. The fact is, I am afraid to build it. I fear that I should soon be saying with Wordsworth,—

Me this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires.

Of all vices I dread idleness most, because it is the fruitful mother of all other vices. The most pitiable creatures I have ever met are the idle rich. I have met them thronging hither and thither from

one pleasure resort to another, always unhappy, discontented, hard to please. How querulous they are! What visible dissatisfaction sits upon their brows! They have exhausted all the potentialities of money long ago. They have long since tired of travel, yet they are condemned to move on, as though driven by a fate. I pass their great houses in the country, places where art and nature have done all that can be done to create a paradise, and I find them given up to gardeners and servants. "Is the family often here?" I ask. "Oh dear no," is the reply, "they never come for longer than a month in a year, and last year they did not come at all." They have many houses, but they have no home. They have drunk so deep of pleasure from the birth that now there is no cup so distasteful to them.

For the man who has worked hard for eleven months of the year, the holiday month is a season of pure delight. It is an exhilarating novelty to have nothing to do. He has regained complete possession of himself, and there is an intense joy in knowing that the hours are his own. He has had to save his money to secure this delight, and depend upon it there is no pleasure in the spending of money which has cost us nothing to possess. The same truth applies to leisure. If leisure is to be appreciated, it must be duly earned. "The weight of chance desires" is one of the most crushing burdens a man can carry, and the yoke of the hardest drudgery does not weigh so sorely on the spirit.

I am not sure whether, even from a purely literary point of view, it is not an advantage to a writer to have something to engage his attention outside the making of books. If you take the lives of our two greatest poets, we find that Shakespeare was actor as well as playwright, and that Milton was a man of affairs. It is notorious that Carlyle would have rejoiced in some public appointment, and a writer who professes to explain the secret of Carlyle's life informs us that his frequent misery had its root in what he conceived to be the neglect by public men of his faculty for public service. Macaulay was a hard-worked servant of the state, and Matthew Arnold was an inspector of schools. It is by no means clear that Milton would have written finer poetry in a life of lettered ease, or that Carlyle would have found regular daily duties a hindrance to his power of literary expression. On the contrary, it may be argued that the mind comes to its literary task with a rebound and with freshness, when such a task is the foil to other energies of thought. The mind of the exclusive literary artist is apt to prey upon itself, and thus becomes sterile. Acquaintance with life, the daily attention and stimulus of duties performed amid the crowd, feeds the mind with fresh thought, and by giving the faculty of literary expression periods of repose, strengthens it for its hours of activity. It is at least certain that some of the best books have been written by busy men, and by men whose lives have embraced a good deal more than literature.

If I had the full control of public customs, I would prohibit holidays altogether in the form in which we now take them. What is that form? We serve so many months in a House of Bondage, and then break loose in a sort of mad hurried exodus. We all leave our Egypt at the same time, and we crowd along a common road. We have endured as much of the strain of life as we can, and from the fiercest activity we plunge at once into absolute idleness. The general idea of a holiday does not go beyond the hastiest possible transit to the nearest watering-place, followed by a series of aimless days in uncomfortable lodgings or crowded promenades. This is not the way to take a holiday. The whole method is wrong from beginning to end. In the first place we have no right to strain ourselves to the last limit before we rest. It is a form of insanity for which the physical price is tremendous. Still less can we justify the habit of crowding all our work into one period, and all our rest and recreation into another. The seventh day, which was given for a rest-day, has its sanction in the physical need for repose at short intervals. The secret of real recreation is that it is taken at short intervals, and is not too prolonged. How much better would it be for us to take a few days' change once a quarter, than to work like slaves for eleven months at a stretch, and then lounge like naked savages for another month. And in fact the present custom defeats its own end. Men of active impulses get tired of a holiday long before it is over,

because there is too much of it at once. Leisure, like pleasure, is most effectual in small doses. I know very well that for any set tour—Italy or Norway, for example—a considerable period is necessary ; but speaking of the great mass of workers, I am perfectly sure that very short holidays taken frequently would prove a far greater physical benefit, and would be far more enjoyable, because their very brevity would give them fresh zest.

I met the other day a remark of Professor Max Müller's which set me thinking. It was to the effect that the men who had made the highest mark in mature life, so far as the wide circle of his own friendships went, were the men who had known the luxury and beauty of scholarly leisure. Our young men, continued the Professor, "have no time or opportunity to be idle ; they work so hard that they have no time to look to the right or the left, and they give themselves no time to develop. I believe in cultured idleness."

That this is, in the main, a just and accurate criticism of one aspect of modern life few will doubt. The highest powers of thought and action are perfected in solitude, and solitude we lack. There has grown up a veritable Gospel of Hurry, and men have forgotten that the dissipation of energy over a multitude of subjects, without regard to the proper equipoise of work and leisure, is about as harmful a habit of life as can be well imagined. It is not alone in universities that men become prematurely exhausted ;

modern life moves everywhere with increased velocity, and the ministry of leisure is less and less appreciated. The older generation was not always on the run to catch something at "three minutes to" or "ten minutes after." It understood that there is a silence in which the soul grows, and an inaction in which action comes to birth. When we have said all that it is fair to say in praise of work, it is necessary to remind ourselves that we have no right to be mastered by our work, and to become its slaves. For the sake of our work itself leisure is necessary. When we ignore the resources of leisure which are ours, we invariably find that sooner or later the very capacity for leisure disappears. Who has not remarked this process and its deplorable results among his acquaintances—perhaps in himself? One by one the resources which used to make the leisure hour like a green place in the desert disappear under the withering touch of haste, excitement, worry. The sustained calm and concentration of mind needed for successful study is the first to go. The ministry of literature, once so delightful, falls slowly but surely into desuetude. The feeling of delight in Nature disappears. The rush of life, like a vast Maelstrom with wide-revolving circles, engulfs us, and drags us into its vortex. Finally, for want of understanding the uses of leisure, the very capacity for leisure perishes, and the occasional respite from work becomes more intolerable to us than drudgery itself.

Now we may be very sure that when we fail to

appreciate the uses of leisure, we have committed upon ourselves a great and vital wrong. There is an art of idleness quite as well worth emulation and practice as the art of work. The greatest workers have always been men who have thoroughly understood the art of idleness. There are few things sadder than the spectacle of leisure as an unfamiliar boon in the hands of men who do not know how to use it, and who do not comprehend that it is meant to afford them an escape from themselves into a world of wider sympathies. What, for example, can be more saddening than the idle swaying to and fro of a Sunday crowd in London? To great masses of people Sunday is a day of torture, because they do not know how to turn it to a day of delight. Not having cultivated home-life, the home has little charm for them; not caring for books, the hours of enforced idleness have no aim; and unless the church or the gin-shop claims them, the day is a prolonged misery, and it is a genuine relief to wake on Monday morning with the sense of some definite task to be done. They are like captive birds who have lost the love of liberty, and gladly return to the cage. The escape from themselves is a painful and undesired deliverance. They do not know how to use their leisure, and therefore it becomes to them a bane rather than a blessing.

It is not only in a city that we see such things: the right use of leisure is uncommon among all classes. We are not a light-hearted or joyous race. We do not know how to make use of the available

happiness of the common day. We have little faculty for weaving a bright margin, however narrow, round the grey warp and woof of the working day. Our national habit is, as I have said, to work without a thought of pleasure for forty-eight or fifty weeks in the year, and then to expect pleasure in the sudden reversal of all our habits in the month or fortnight that remains. Men rush to the seaside, not because they have any deep or real delight in the murmurous music of the waves, or the "sapphire-spangled" shifting waste of water, whose broken light and ripple made the old poet talk of the "multitudinous laughter" of the sea; not because the vastness, nor the solemn awe and mystery, nor the midnight silence with its odours and its peace, for one moment moves them to any genuine thrill of joy. Ozone is simply a medicine; the sea is only one of our many doctors—and we need a great deal of doctoring if we would keep our place in the fierce race of life. The annual exodus is simply the pathetic proof of the overstrain under which our daily work is done. It is the proof that we are over-driven and know it. The thing to be recollected is, then, that neither work nor leisure ought to be taken in the mass. We need to accustom ourselves to the wise use of the margins of time that each day affords us, or it is vain to suppose that we can ever find any real joy in holidays. Our life cannot be divided into rigid compartments: work and leisure act and react perpetually on one another. This is the true philosophy of pleasure, and he alone is wise who learns it

early, and practises it before the rigidity of middle life fixes his habits into a final mould.

This ideal of short rests at frequent intervals is not easily possible to most of us; but nevertheless we can do a good deal to adjust the balance between work and pleasure by learning to enjoy what is within our reach. This is one of the lessons oftenest taught by Wordsworth, and nowhere more beautifully than in his poem to the "Little Celandine":—

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star :
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that make a mighty rout :
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower, I'll make a stir
Like a great astronomer.

In another way, and from another point of view, Shelley bears the same witness as Wordsworth. Who has read Shelley's life without envy for its utter freedom of movement? He went whither he would, at the call of loveliness; and to the poor clerk chained to his city desk, what picture can be more fascinating, more tantalizing? Yet Shelley in one of his letters breaks out, "What are mountains, trees, heaths, or even the glorious and ever-beautiful sky, to friends? All that I see in Italy—and from my tower-window I now see the magnificent peaks of the Apennine half enclosing the plain—is nothing; it dwindles into smoke in the mind, when I think of some familiar forms of scenery, little perhaps in themselves, over

which old remembrances have thrown a delightful colour. How we prize what we despised when present ! " It is the lesson of the "Little Celandine" taught again : the surest pleasures lie nearest to us, and are the simplest. And Shelley too felt "the weight of chance desires." He longed for a definite and practical work in life, and for want of it was unhappy. He affords another instance of the peril of uncontrolled freedom, and not merely the peril, but the pains. When we reflect on these things we begin to see the truth of the old prophetic saying, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." The yoke not merely steadies and disciplines us, but by its imposition of labour it teaches us the value of rest, and by its wearisome restraints it fits us for the use of freedom.

There are, in truth, few paths of life so dismally barren that they do not furnish simple joys, innocent pleasures, which, like the celandine, flower at the very wayside. The Londoner has within his reach, if he only knew it, some of the loveliest country in the world, and at the expense of a few pence and a few hours once a week, he can enjoy a perpetual holiday. Let any one who would know how much lies within reach of the city clerk take the train to Epsom, and walk along the Downs into Dorking ; or if this is too far, let him explore Epping Forest. But even when such excursions as these are impracticable (lying as they do within the easy compass of a Saturday afternoon), there is much in London itself which is worth

exploration. In one of the most pathetic and remarkable books of our time, the author says: "I got into the habit of rising very early in the morning, and walking out to Kensington Gardens and back before breakfast, varying my route occasionally, so as even to reach Battersea Bridge, which was always a favourite spot with me. Kensington Gardens and Battersea Bridge were poor substitutes for the downs, and for the level stretch by the river towards the sea, but we make too much of circumstances, and the very pressure of London produced a sensibility to whatever loveliness could be apprehended there, which was absent when loveliness was always around me. The stars seen in Oxford Street late one night; a sunset one summer evening from Lambeth Pier; and above everything, Piccadilly very early one summer morning, abide with me still when much that was more romantic has been forgotten."

No one can doubt that this suggestive confession of Mark Rutherford's is true. We might even go farther, and say that, with many men, the passion for the country has largely sprung out of the modern growth of cities, and that it is the denial of our instincts for natural loveliness through so many months of the year which makes their operation such an intense joy when the rebound comes. But my contention is that the denial need not be so complete as we make it, and he who will avail himself of the pleasures at the wayside of life will find many a flower which the careless eye will not discern.

In another respect also Mark Rutherford expresses an essential truth about holidays when he speaks of the memory of beautiful things abiding with him. A view, a scene, a sunset, which has once made a sharp and definite impression on the memory, is never lost. It will glow for ever before that inner eye which "is the bliss of solitude." I have already referred to this: I trust I shall be pardoned for including in this essay half a dozen verses, scribbled the day after one of my holidays concluded, which expressed my feeling at the time, and still expresses it.

The space of free breathing is over,
The wheels grind under my feet ;
Stale, and fetid, and clammy,
I smell the smell of the street.

Yet something is mine : each morning
I hear the splash of the sea,
And through my dreams it sparkles
And quivers incessantly.

Round my chair the heather is growing,
And the walls of my study fade
And change, till they seem blue mountains
Dappled with sun and shade.

An odour of pinewoods haunts me,
A murmur of hidden streams
Thrills under the sooty pavements,
For I live in a city of dreams.

Lo ! I am a great magician,
At a word occult and true
The city like mist is scattered,
And the sea rushes into view.

The life I have lived is portion
Of all that is best in me ;
To have lived it once is also
To live it eternally.

There are only two rules for a successful holiday : the first is to earn it, the second is to have just enough holiday to make the prospect of work pleasant. I need say nothing upon the first rule, because all that I have already said is its exposition. As to the second, I have always found that it supplies the true test of whether or not a holiday has been successful. Periods of rest we all need, but labour and not rest is the synonym of life. From these periods of rest we should return with a new appetite for the duties of common life. If we return dissatisfied, enervated, without heart for work, we may be sure our holiday has been a failure. If we return with the feeling that it is good to plunge into the mid-stream of life again, and feel the rush of its strenuous tides, we may know by this sign that we are morally braced and strengthened by our exodus. The wise man will never allow his holiday to be a time of mere idleness. He will turn again to the books that interest him, he will touch the fringe of some science for which his holiday gives him opportunity, or, at the least, he will plunge into physical recreation, and shake off the evil humours of the body in active exercise. The failure of most holidays lies in the fact that nothing of this sort is attempted. The holiday is simply a series of aimless days, and the

natural result is *ennui*. The supreme purpose of a holiday should be to regain possession of ourselves. We have escaped the fret of life, we are out of reach of the persistent door-bell or the petulant ringing of the telephone ; we have time to think, to inspect our own hearts, to take stock of our aims and purposes, to open our souls to the subtle ministries of Nature—time, in a word, to feel, to reflect, to recollect our powers. He who does this comes back from his holiday as from a sanctuary. He has drunk of the waters of peace, he is restored in spirit, and he enters the crowded street again with a new firmness in his step, and a corresponding vigour in his mind and spirit.

It is because such a philosophy as this really involves a definite plan of life, that I am anxious that youth should find it worthy of all acceptance. In mid-life the appeal comes too late: habits have become fixed, the warp and woof of life have taken their pattern and colour, receptivity is exhausted, change is difficult and unwelcome, and a certain glaze of finality has spread itself over all our thoughts and actions. In this, as in other matters, it is to youth that we must look to inaugurate a more rational and a nobler plan of life. With most of us the relative failure of our lives to reach those ends which we see to be good in themselves and desirable for their effect on us, is that we see them too late. We do not master the principles of the wise life, but leave ourselves to the drift of time and chance. We do

not ask ourselves early in life what we conceive to be the best method of life, and then adjust our circumstances to our convictions, but spend so many years in an idle equanimity, that when at last we begin to see that the best gifts of life are slipping out of our hands, we have no strength to retain them, and no energy to resist the pressure of general custom. The life that has unity of design in it, and that finally attracts attention by the air of fine completion which distinguishes it, is always the life which has been built upon certain fixed principles, and these principles have been, as it were, the architect's plan, without which the edifice would have been but "pillared rottenness." Let me therefore conclude by roughly putting my moral into axiomatic form, for axioms are the landmarks that are set up in a difficult and treacherous country to show us which way the road of safety lies.

1. The great weapon by which the world is conquered is health. Nothing can compensate for the loss of health. Here and there men of genius have been found who from lifelong sick chambers have moved the world with their thoughts; but the instances are rare. More commonly the man of genius has owed his power to his superb physical vitality. Goethe, Gladstone, Tennyson, and Browning inherited fine constitutions, and they took care to preserve them. Science has forced home upon us the truth that the brain is dependent on the body, and to think well we must *be* well. If you want to make a

mark in life, take care of your body, and the body will take care of you.

2. No gain of position or reputation we may make is worth the price, if it be at the sacrifice of health. There is so much available vitality in the body, and if you exhaust it prematurely, when you most need it, you will fail for want of it. To sacrifice sleep, fresh air, and recreation for a few more pounds a year is insanity. "Give me health and a day," said Emerson, "and I will make the pomp of empire ridiculous." I had rather be a stalwart ploughman than a paralytic millionaire.

3. No material gain can compensate us for the loss of leisure, or the loss of those powers by which we appreciate nature, books, art, and the beautiful things of life. I have known men who have been so intent on making money, that at fifty they have been incapable of any idea that was not mercantile. The rim of the guinea was for them the horizon of the whole world. A decent dog had the advantage of them every way in the interests of his life and his general behaviour.

4. However hard-driven life may be, every one can find time for the culture of his finer powers, if he will. To achieve a fine character is better than to gain a great position. To lose your own soul and gain the world is a bargain so idiotic that only fools make it.

5. Given health, interest in life, plenty of work, plenty of pluck, purpose, and aspiration, you cannot be a pessimist. The pessimists are mostly people

who have nothing to do. Pessimism is the product of either indolence or liver disease.

6. The twentieth century will probably be the most difficult, but the best century the world has ever known. The whole trend of legislation is toward the better regulation of life. The Eight Hours' Day, at least in regard to the more severe forms of labour, such as the colliers', will soon become a fact. The need for leisure, if we are to have a great and not a degraded people, is fast being recognised. I should not wonder if in another decade there is a movement back again from the city to the country. In any case great cities will multiply their parks, their avenues, their facilities for getting fresh air, and there is no reason why a city, properly managed, should not be as delightful as the country. The means of education in literature, science, and art, are rapidly being put within reach of the poorest. Religious teaching has become more practical and real. If we will let Christ manage our lives for us, if we will live in the spirit of His great axiom, that "a man's *life* consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses," He will guide us to the earthly Utopia. Utopia is the Kingdom of God upon the earth. Will the twentieth century see it?

THE MINISTRY OF BOOKS

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I.

I TAKE it for granted that no young man who seeks to live a full and adequate life will omit that peculiar culture of the mind which comes from a love of literature and the study of books. I do not for a moment contend that the only means of developing mental power is by reading. On the contrary, we have the case of Wordsworth, whose house was not indeed without books, but whose real study was out of doors, and whose poetry owes little to literature for suggestion, but almost everything to the strong impulses of a deeply original mind. It is quite possible to become, as James Smetham put it, a creature who merely "eats books," devouring them with indiscriminate appetite, and deriving no real intellectual nutriment from them. To think counts for much more than to read, and the real end of reading is to stimulate and develop the powers of thought. For, while it is true that an exceptional man may learn to be a true and strong thinker with no adequate help from books, yet books are so obviously the vehicles of thought, that it is impossible that the ordinary man should gain real width of view without them.

Of the books which are absolutely needful to the

acquisition of common knowledge, I do not now speak ; but rather of those wise and memorable writings, which in all generations have been the delight and solace of multitudes, who without their kindly ministry would have found life a desolate and arid waste, without a green oasis or a brook by the way. The arithmetic and the grammar rank with air and water as necessities of civilized life ; but these stand related to books much as the alphabet does to literature. We do not live by air and water alone, and it is our own fault if our minds are condemned to so pitiful a poverty. For the first thing that a young man of to-day has to congratulate himself upon, and one of the chief things, is that he lives in an age when the best books of the greatest masters are easily accessible to the poorest. The use of libraries is one of the chief privileges which those who live in large towns and great cities may enjoy. A free library is a sort of secular church : it is a temple where the greatest voices of the ages may be heard : it is the treasury of a wisdom gathered from all lands, and he who uses it aright has provided for him without cost a liberal education. Until this truth is recognised, and free libraries are found in every town and village, we must still be ranked as a barbarian people, or a people at best but partially delivered from barbarism.

If, however, only for the reason that public libraries are not yet so universal as gaols, workhouses, and beer-shops, it is all the more necessary that a young man should attempt to gather books for himself. Indeed,

it is necessary on all grounds, for no public library, however accessible and adequate, can ever afford the pleasure that is gained by handling one's own books, which represent so many epochs of taste or inspiration in the growth of our own mind. Nor is this a vain counsel of perfection, for there is no excuse to-day for any youth who is ignorant of the great masterpieces of literature. In a recent speech Lord Rosebery reminded his audience that they could get Shakespeare and all the great poets for ninepence apiece, Bacon's Essays for threepence, Macaulay's England for four shillings, Dickens and Scott for fourpence-halfpenny per volume, and his list might have been indefinitely extended. I should like my readers to reflect upon how vast a boon is thus placed within their hands by cheap printing. I can remember that in my father's library there was scarcely a book that had cost less than six shillings, and almost every book represented forethought, economy, and self-denial, such as the poorest reader is not called upon to exercise to-day. It is literally true that the artisan of to-day has a far better opportunity of getting a library together than the tradesman or the student of fifty years ago. Indeed, Lord Rosebery went much further, and said that the merchant princes of the Middle ages, the Fouquets and the Medici, had no such opportunities as the London artisans of to-day have. The literature of the world lies open to the humblest, and there is nothing now-a-days to prevent the man whose life is

most limited, laborious, and ill-paid, from having some acquaintance with the books, which mark the splendid culminations of human science and art, and are, as Milton said, the "precious life-blood of master-spirits."

On this theme, of the joy of possessing books, let me for a moment become autobiographical. When I was a boy an old gentleman gave me three books, and to this hour I can recall the pride and pleasure I took in the fact that I had a bookshelf of my own. From that date I began to be a book-buyer. A little later on I became the possessor of *Chambers' Encyclopedia of English Literature*, and to those two thick volumes I owe the impulse that has made me a student of literature and a writer of books. There is a great deal, after all, to be said for John Ruskin's doctrine that books ought to be bought and paid for at a fair rate if they are worth anything, because a man values most that which represents a real self-denial and a gratified aspiration. But quite apart from any question of cost, it is absolutely clear that the book that is bought gives a man a great deal more pleasure than the book that is borrowed. I would encourage every child to buy a few books, and keep a shelf for them. So far as young men are concerned, there is nothing likelier to help them in the redemption of the evening, to keep them from the streets and the pleasure which poisons and corrupts, than the knowledge that they can find at home a friend who never ceases to please, who is

always at hand, always welcome, and always ready to give the best treasure of experience and wisdom for the asking: and all this is what a good book does for us. A love of reading does more than add a grace to life, and a pleasure to the idle hour: it has often been in the cases of the conquerors of the world, the secret source from which have been fed the purposes that made them famous, the retreat in which their souls grew strong to endure, and their thoughts were re-fledged for flight. Therefore when we praise the libraries let us also be grateful to the cheap bookseller, and let every youth who wants to be anything in the world seek to get a library of his own.

From the young man's point of view, then, I should first of all lay great stress upon a love of reading as a moral safeguard. For some years I have been placed in relations to young men which have given me unusual opportunities of observing and understanding their special temptations, and I say without fear of contradiction, that a love of books is one of the finest possible safeguards against the corruptions that peculiarly menace the opening years of manhood. I well remember how a friend of mine, who is to-day among the most trusted leaders in a great church, once told his audience that when he lived as a youth in Bloomsbury, he made his daily journey to the city with a book in his hand, and that if there were temptations in the streets, he never saw them, and if he had seen them would have been

shielded from their seduction by the fascinations of that life of thought which had already absorbed and enraptured him. Charles Dickens, in one of the most pathetic passages of *David Copperfield*, tells us, in the same spirit, that he might have been a little robber or a little thief, but that he had learned, as a forlorn child alone in a London garret, to read the great masterpieces of English fiction, and to find in them a golden world of imagination, whose doors opened to him at will, and whose influence saved and stimulated him. The sins of youth frequently spring from lack of intellectual resource. If we ask what is the secret of those shameful indulgences, those idle and vicious passions, which lay hold on youth, and break its promise, and destroy its power, the answer in nine cases out of ten will be the lack of intellectual resource, and of any definite self-discipline and culture. A youth who has no thirst for knowledge, and no interest in ideas, is very apt to become a mere lounging animal on the prowl for mischief. I do not find that the sickening and shameful confessions of morbid thought and vicious action which so often distress me, are made by youths who are pursuing definite aims of self-culture: these acts and thoughts are the plague and punishment of the aimless life. Work the mind thoroughly, and lust has to retire from the field; pursue high intellectual aims, and the carnal element dies down for lack of fuel; develop the mental and moral forces, and you expel from the blood the tiger and the ape. The youth

who earnestly cultivates the intellectual life will assuredly find that the toil of his brain braces and invigorates his moral nature, and makes him insensible to those germs of poisonous passion with which the atmosphere of youth is charged. The best way to starve the passions is to feed the mind, and he who is enfranchised of the world of books, hears within his own mind so pure and high a music, that the song of the sirens vainly lures him. ✓

But not only are books a safeguard of the soul—they are indispensable to any life that aspires. I have already said that great men have always found in books the stimulus of self-development : I may add, that they have also found that in the worst conceivable depression of circumstances it is possible to pursue intellectual ideals, and attain the citizenship of wisdom. Young men often complain that their daily employment is so arduous and mechanical, that it leaves them no margin for self-culture ; but no employment under the sun can wholly sterilize a man's mind, unless it be by his own conscious connivance. Michael Faraday worked at a forge ; but did his mind submit to stagnation because his toil was purely mechanical, and worth nothing more than the mere bread it earned ? Edwards, the Scotch naturalist, was a cobbler—a mechanical and uninteresting employment, if ever there was one ; but did it kill his passion for knowledge ? Hugh Miller was a stonemason ; but did even that long and exhausting physical labour so dull his intellect, that when the hours of

labour ended, his whole interest in life had faded out ? Or, take the case of David Livingstone. We should all admit that there is no form of employment much more mechanical than feeding a machine. Day in and day out the same thing has to be done in the same way, and with the same result. But what did Livingstone do ? He was never without a book. His thirst for knowledge was insatiable. He read on his way to and from the factory ; he put his book upon the loom ; he read far into the night. He would not permit his mind to be dulled by the monotony of his employment. He was zealous and indefatigable in maintaining an outlook toward a larger life. The result was that Livingstone did not long remain a factory-lad. He did for himself by sedulous self-instruction what Faraday did when he took note of the chemistries of the fiery forge, and Edwards of the cry of the bird that came to him through his open window, and Miller, when he traced in the stone he hewed the waves of a primeval sea, and the hieroglyphics that concealed the records of an immeasurable past. Therefore the plea is inadmissible, that a monotonous employment is a fair excuse for a stagnant brain. If it be true that a man's employment is both monotonous and arduous, there is all the greater need of books as a relaxation : if such toil is also so entirely mechanical that it really absorbs but a fraction of the higher powers of thought, there is all the larger remainder of power available for private culture. To such men I may say, as Christ

said of the man with one talent, who misused it simply because it was one and not five, "Thou oughtest *therefore*" to be the more careful to put it out to the golden usury of opportunity.

In these matters few of us are sufficiently sensitive to the value of time as an element in self-culture. I would ask the youth who complains of the poverty of his opportunities, whether he has ever soberly considered how much can be accomplished by a single hour a day of serious communion with books? A novelist, who holds the premier place among French writers to-day, told us recently something of his methods of work. He does not produce more than fifteen hundred words a day, which is, roughly speaking, about three pages of foolscap. Three hours a day is the limit of his work. This seems little enough, but consider what it has accomplished. In twenty years it has produced twenty volumes. The secret lies not so much in the intensity of this industry as in its regularity. Nothing has been permitted to interfere with this normal daily production, and the fame which it has achieved is very largely the victory of a strenuous and undelaying patience. The lesson seems to be, that three hours a day, wisely used, may accomplish almost anything. It is the total aggregation of small scraps of time, devoted to a set purpose, that achieves great ends. Here, again, we may fruitfully consider Wesley's wise saying : " Never be unemployed, and never be triflingly employed." The very name Methodist arose because Wesley and his work-

ers were men who knew the value of time, dividing the day and using all its moments with a jealous vigilance to get the most and best out of them. They were methodical, and their method told upon the world. Method always tells. It is really as easy to read noble literature as the sweepings of a printing office, if the habit be once formed ; and if men would give day by day to the reading of the best books the time they devote to scraps of ephemeral journalism, there is many a rich realm of knowledge which they might easily annex. Use the unused fractions of time for self-culture, and life will pass out of clouded monotony into a zone of radiant activity and hope. Gather up the wasted moments, which are as the scattered gold-dust of time, and they may readily be wrought into the golden crown of wisdom.

There is another aspect of the question which is worth comment. I hold that the man who has his own private aims of culture will be all the better able to do the work well by which his living is gained. He will possess a rebound and resilience of mind which will make him the better servant of his master, and will enable him to put into the most mechanical toil a new spirit, which will tell for his advancement in the long run. If I had to choose between the clerk who is only a clerk, who knows absolutely nothing outside the office and cares for nothing, and the clerk who goes from the office to use his leisure in self-culture, I would unhesitatingly choose the latter, and why ? Because the active brain is always worth

more in any business than the stagnant and stereotyped brain. Culture is worth something, even in the employments where it seems least needed, and in the most unexpected ways it vindicates itself. Wisdom is always justified of her children, and the man who has disciplined his mind and stored his brain with knowledge may rest assured that life will not only bring the hour when such knowledge will be needed, but the hour when this knowledge will very probably become the weapon whereby he conquers circumstance.

II.

But when I speak of the ministry of books, I am chiefly thinking not so much of the books that directly add to our stores of knowledge as of those books which touch the imagination and the emotions—the books which are themselves great works of creative imagination, and therefore the greatest of books. We read not merely to inform ourselves, to add to our stores of definite knowledge, but also to instruct our impulses, and to nourish in ourselves fine and noble tempers. The best books live by the appeal they make to the heart, even more than by the appeal they make to the reason. They move us, inspire us, console us; they make life less difficult, and its drudgeries more endurable; they trouble the waters of sympathy within us, and keep them from stagnation; they enlarge our interests, quicken our emotions, and drop the golden haze of the ideal over the gray monotonies

of a leaden and prosaic life. The great works of the literary imagination, the memorable romances and enduring poems and dramas, are an accessible Paradise, with no hostile angel at the gate, and whosoever will may enter, and eat of the fruit of life. It was a truly pious prayer of a great man that God would bless His servant Walter Scott, for the happiness he had given to tens of thousands in the reading of his immortal fictions. And the more material is an age, the more should we appreciate the beneficence of the genius which creates for us the world of the ideal, and the more diligently should we cultivate that gracious art of detachment, which enables us to pass at will from our world of gray realities into its clear and golden atmosphere.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say much about fiction : that can very well take care of itself. The teller of a story is always sure of his audience ; but the poet is not so sure. Yet of all the ministries which shape us to the highest ends, and afford us the most exquisite delights, the ministry of poetry is the noblest.

Among the many touching incidents in connection with the funeral of Lord Tennyson, in Westminster Abbey, was the fact that more than one hard-pressed business man, who could ill spare the time, came up from remote parts of the country to be present at the last manifestations of reverence which could be given to one who had been to them, as to multitudes, a guide, philosopher, and friend through a long lifetime. We can understand people of leisure and literary

tastes reverencing the genius of Tennyson. Poetry is very generally looked upon as the luxury of the leisured. It is supposed to minister to an acquired taste ; to demand a certain poetic or, at least, æsthetic fibre in the reader, if it is to be felt and understood. It is a cunning music for prepared ears ; it may fitly vibrate with delicate modulations on the still air of the student's library or the lady's boudoir ; but what has it to do with the great mass of men who toil and endure ? How can the ear accustomed to the clangour of the streets, and filled with jostling roar of traffic, stocks, percentages, and discounts, find pleasure in it ? One of these gray-haired business men told his story in the newspapers immediately after the funeral. He said that in the darkest hour of his life, when his heart was bruised by the tragedy of disappointment and lost love, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* fell into his hands. It was a fruit of the tree of life for the healing of his grief. It opened to him a world of broader horizons. It ministered to the mind diseased. From that hour Tennyson became to him a friend who was closer than a brother. Through all the long years of harassment and business vexation, his was the calm, prophetic voice that comforted and sustained him. He had found not merely in his poetry that which added a grace to thought, a joy and a refinement to life, but a power that touched the soul and held it above the corruption of sordid and selfish purposes. And for this reason he stood beside the grave in Westminster as a true mourner, and came away

with the lines of the great poet making requiem in his ears :—

Three dead men have I loved,
And thou wert last of the three.

The fact is, that of all classes of men who might be enumerated, business men most need to study poetry. The art of detachment is one of the rarest but most valuable of all the arts which a man can master. Many great workers have told us, and with reiterated emphasis, that the supreme secret of keeping the mind fresh and buoyant is to set it upon widely differing tasks. When a man's mind begins to run in a groove, it begins to wear out. We have an unpleasant word for such a victim of over-concentration ; we call him a monomaniac, a one-ideal man. One of the greatest theologians England ever produced, at the very climax of his influence, became mad, and chiefly because he had no interests outside theology. "Blessed is the man who has a hobby," said Horace Walpole, and he was right, because a hobby means a change of interests, and turns a man's mind at will from one set of thoughts to another wholly different. Variety is the great law of mental health. It is the great secret of such an omnivorous reader and indefatigable worker as Mr. Gladstone. Some one once asked him how he managed to do so much work and keep his energies so fresh. He replied that in his young days there was a bit of road leading out of London which had the reputation of killing more horses than any road in the country. Why? Was it

hilly? No: it was absolutely level, and that was the mischief of it. A dead level takes more out of horses than the worst succession of hills; and as with horses so with men. Mr. Gladstone reads everything, and has cultivated a greater variety of interests than any great statesman of whom we have a record. He turns at will from the dry discussions of statistics to learned prelections on Homeric poetry, and at eighty-four can spare time from cabinet councils to run down to Oxford and lecture upon the various systems of university teaching. Sir Robert Peel, when he gave Tennyson a pension, had to confess that he had never read a line of his poetry. But Mr. Gladstone knows the writings of every modern poet, and can find time to read the books of obscure authors and write critical postcards about them. Is not the result seen in the amazing versatility and buoyancy of Mr. Gladstone's mind? Has not this consummate skill in the art of detachment done much to keep his mind fresh and vivacious, and to prolong far beyond the human average his powers of work?

That which is true of a great man of affairs such as Mr. Gladstone, applies equally, in its relative degree, to the great army of youths who find themselves engaged in the dusty arena of commerce. For them also poetry arrays its stupendous stage, and fills the air with the orchestral voices of its infinite music. They, too, may hear the faery horn blowing, and wander by the shores of old romance. Poetry is not a literary luxury: it is a necessity for all who wish

to keep their thoughts high and their emotions fresh. The staple of the world's best thought is to be found in poetry. In the clear dream and solemn vision of the poet all the best hope, and faith, and fervour of the world find expression. Is it, then, a foolish thing to claim that many a man of business would discover that he had a new power of grappling with the complicated details of affairs, if he had refreshed his mind from time to time by the study of the poets? When the body wearies and the nerves fail, we fly at once to the woods or to the sea; but the woods of Shakespeare are greener far than any that these earthly eyes will ever see, and the seas of Shelley gleam with a wonder and a charm that no depth or turbulence of earthly waters ever had. Rosalind meets us there, for the forest is the forest of Arden; Julian and Maddalo, for the sea is the sea of Italy. There is no tedious journey, nor humbling inquisition of ways and means: we reach our promised land in the beating of a pulse. The fresh wind blows upon us, the fine intellectual ozone passes through us, and the mind recovers tone and energy. We are not merely the happier, but the wiser, the stronger, the more capable of work, for our incursion into this diviner realm; for the way to retain the vigour of the mind is to let all its parts work—the imagination and the fancy equally with the calculation and the logic, and the work you give one faculty will be the rest and recreation of the other. If we never take the band from the wheel, some day the over-driven wheel

will burst into dust and ruin. If we give it time to cool, its space of usefulness will be indefinitely prolonged.

There is another reason why we should cultivate a love of books, which lies in our conception of manhood itself. Is a man fulfilling the design of his Maker by gradually transforming himself into a mere calculating machine? Do not imagination and emotion play a large part in the shaping of character, and can that life be called a full-orbed life in which they have no part? We all remember the pathetic complaint of Darwin, that he found to his sorrow that in the later decades of life he could not read Shakespeare. With that manly honesty which distinguished him he told us the reason. He said that he had made his mind a great machine for grinding out general laws from masses of fact, and that in the process the imaginative faculty had perished. The faculties by which he had once enjoyed Shakespeare had become atrophied; they had perished for lack of use. In the case of Darwin such a deprivation was part of the great sacrifice which he made at the shrine of science; but there are many men who permit this deprivation to overtake them out of sheer stupidity and sordidness of aim. They have never taken the trouble to ask themselves what is the life best worth living, what its ideals should be, and how they may be reached. They have found themselves spinning down a groove, and they have not resisted the deadening and lower-

ing force of their environment. They have fallen into a routine, and, after a few ineffectual struggles to assert their individuality, have been conquered by it, and have become content with it. The only printed matter they ever permit their eyes to rest upon are bill-heads and daily papers. If they enter a library, they are as truly in a foreign land as though they entered Timbuctoo. Books cease to have any significance for them, and consequently seem to have neither use nor value. They know the price of lard and hides, pig iron and coal to a nicety, and develop a sort of animal craft in buying at the lowest price and selling at the highest ; but Isaiah, David, Milton, and Shakespeare are names that convey no meaning to them. The wealth of the world's literature lies about them—the books which have been the consolation of the lonely, the inspiration of the heroic, the meat and drink of the "thought-worn chieftains of the mind" who have moved the springs of human progress—but literature is an alien world to them. They have narrowed their life to the merest money-scraping ; they diligently ply the muck rake, heedless of the angel with the glittering crown who hovers compassionate above them. Is it possible to survey such a misused life with any feeling but pity ? Is not the spectacle of a degraded intelligence one of the saddest that a serious-minded man can look upon ?

We note, also, that there is a sort of wise irony in life which makes itself felt even by these poor slaves of Mammon. Such a man as I have sketched—great

in the world of lard or pig iron or lumber, of no significance whatever outside it—makes money, and money opens for him the doors of a world in which books count for a good deal. He makes his pile, and moves up into the realm of refined society ; for there is no society to-day that cannot be penetrated by the plutocrat. He is able to get a fine house built for him, to get it furnished in the showiest style of art, to surround himself with the refinements and luxuries of wealth. And then it naturally follows that he meets people who know nothing about lard. He finds that the talk among his new acquaintances never touches the familiar realm of lard and pig iron. He hears them discuss the last novel, the newest poem, the most famous picture of the day. As he sits at his dinner table with his new guests, strange names fly hither and thither across the table—*Browning,—Tennyson,—Ruskin*. Who were they? What have they done? He does not care to ask, but he gathers that they are of a despised class called authors. He cannot discover that either of them ever did a big deal in lard or pig iron. He sits silent, irritated at his ignorance, and ignorantly contemptuous of his guests. He tries to turn the conversation upon lard, but he discovers that a silence has fallen on the table ; no one is interested. He feels that somehow he is out of it. It gradually dawns upon him that there is a world in which a fine idea or a perfect poem is thought a great deal more of than the shrewdest deal in lard.

The misery of the position is often aggravated by the fact that the sense of his ignorance is forced upon him by his own children. He has sent them to the best schools, and now he finds, to his dismay, that he has planted them in a new world in which he has no interest. He feels that intellectually he is alienated from them. He begins to see that they are a little ashamed of him. He perceives that they are anxious to keep him away from the subject of lard when there is company present, and, alas ! lard is the one subject on which he can wax eloquent. Have we not seen this tragic comedy a hundred times? Is there any person more to be pitied than the rich ignoramus? Yet all this humiliation might have been spared him if he had, when he begun life, begun also to foster a love of books, and if during the long years of struggle he had only kept one nook of his soul quiet for the wise music of the great poets. It is possible to be diligent in business and still fervent in spirit, to be an able man of affairs and still a lover of all things just and lovely and of good report. The man who fails thus in the culture of his spirit fails altogether. He has made a fortune, but he has spoiled a man.

It is very possible that many men will retort that they never had the least taste for poetry, and it would have been vain for them to have tried to create it. I commend to such men the example of Dr. Monro Gibson. Dr. Gibson tells us that as a youth he was painfully utilitarian. He had never

read the *Arabian Nights*, and could not understand why any one should read so preposterous a book. He could not read poetry, and wondered why a man who had a message to deliver could not do so in plain prose. Presently Tennyson's *In Memoriam* appeared, and the papers were full of its praise. He found that his friends had all read it, and it annoyed him to perceive them deeply stirred and delighted with a book in which he could see no gleam of thought or charm. So thereupon, being a sturdy Scotsman, he resolved to study it. He applied to the book the same patient diligence which had given him the mastery of mathematics and the Latin classics. He analyzed it verse by verse, and beat its meaning out, until suddenly the full charm and splendour of the poem broke upon him, and he found that he had conquered a new world. And now, in the last decades of life, he tells us that through all the long years the *In Memoriam* has been to him a sacred treasure, and his delight in poetry an ever-increasing joy.

There are many men of the same order of mind, who know themselves to be "painfully utilitarian"; but they do not attempt to overcome their utilitarianism. Dr. Monro Gibson rightly judged that there must be something in a poem which the whole press of England had applauded, and he conquered the natural bent of his inclinations that he might find that something. And does it not strike the most utilitarian of my readers that there must be some-

thing in the writings of men whose names are the imperishable glory of the language in which they wrote? Is it not worth while devoting a little time, a little patience, to discover what it is that men have found in Shakespeare to delight generation after generation; and how it is that a great commercial nation like the English should esteem it a just thing to lay the bones of two writers of poetry like Browning and Tennyson among the dust of kings and conquerors in Westminster Abbey? Poetry *is* worth the study even of a business man, because it opens a world of new delight to the soul, and gives the mind the exaltation of wider horizons and clearer vision; and therefore I say, even to the "painfully utilitarian," with Dr. Monro Gibson: "It is of use; get to work. Persevere; keep at it, and the time will come when your whole soul will thrill to Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning as mine does now."

III.

It seems necessary to add a word upon the art of reading, although so much is suggested by the phrase that it would be easy to conceive a whole string of essays arising out of it. The chief thing to remember—and practice—however, seems to be a rational method of selection. It is impossible for the reader with the largest leisure at his command to do more in a long lifetime than read the merest fraction of the world's books, and it becomes all the more necessary, there-

fore, that he should choose his friends with care. One of Newman's favourite illustrations was of a servant-girl who comes downstairs in the early morning and looks upon the many rooms which demand her care, but is so overwhelmed by the sense of how much there is to be done, that she goes to bed again in despair, and does nothing. It is very easy to feel in this way about literature. Every year there is more to read, and the attention is hopelessly distracted by the multitude of books that may honestly put in a claim to attention. The world of books is a vast continent, in which new dependencies are constantly annexed ; it has its great roads, its metropolitan centres, its beautiful and famous kingdoms, and also its strange bye-paths, its hidden retreats, its seclusions, and its cloistered gardens, which few travellers find, and where fewer still are content to dwell. The man to whom the study of books is the business of life will often be found straying in these strange bye-paths, but the ordinary reader will do well to travel by the main roads. There are names in literature which are truly metropolitan : we know them as we know Paris, Rome, Vienna. Round them glory and tradition have accumulated, and their splendour is assured and famous. Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Carlyle, Montaigne, Bunyan, are eternal names. Much may be omitted in our itinerary, but we dare not miss these. To do so would be as though we went to Italy, and did not think it worth our while to see Rome, Florence, Venice.

One of the most famous of French critics has said that the great critic is he who narrates the adventures of his soul among the masterpieces : clearly for all of us the masterpieces must be the first care. It is a good rule to ask before we read a book, how old is it ? The book of yesterday may be a masterpiece too ; but we cannot be entirely sure about it. But there is no such doubt about the books that have survived a century or more. In the fierce, continuous flame of Time only the pure gold can live ; and it is the rarest of events to discover a book which has received universal neglect, and yet deserves universal praise. There is, after all, substantial justice in the fate of books. Time is the one critic who never fails in true discrimination. The first thing we have to do is, therefore, to make friends of the masterpieces. A single shelf of moderate dimensions will hold all the greatest of them, and the price of a couple of suits of clothes will buy them. The man who has read with thoroughness his Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Gibbon, and the Bible, is an educated man, even though he may read nothing else. The best elements of all that make great literature are familiar to him. His ear is filled with the large music and discourse of the immortals, and his pulse is quickened by their august comradeship. Particularly is this true of the English Bible, which, from the point of view of literature alone, is the greatest book in all the world. If for any of us familiarity with the Bible has dulled our apprehension of its literary splendour, we may profit-

ably reflect on the saying of Heine: "What a book! Vast and wide as the world, rooted in the abysses of creation, and towering up beyond the blue secrets of heaven. Sunrise and sunset, promise and fulfilment, birth and death, the whole drama of humanity, are all in this book!" "The memoirs of God," indeed, as he once called it.

In the practical application of the art of reading it is well also to observe some definiteness of aim. Books cluster round one another, and in truth form distinct and separate kingdoms. No one will ever understand Shelley, or Byron, or Wordsworth, who is not intimately acquainted with the forces out of which their lives grew, and in obedience to which they moved. We need to read their lives, their letters, their diaries, the reminiscences of their friends, and the best criticisms on their poetry. There is something very fascinating to the true student in such an undertaking. He finds the point of view continually shifting, adjusting itself to new knowledge, modifying itself to new limits or enlargements. Poetry, especially, is so intimate a message of the soul to the soul, that we cannot expect to comprehend the utterance without understanding the man. As a mere matter of culture it is far better worth the while of a reader to understand one writer with thoroughness than to have a superficial knowledge of many. The same rule applies more or less to all our reading. If, for example, we cannot make ourselves masters of the whole vast range of history or biography, we

may at least take a period, and master that. We may read everything that has been written about the Puritans or the French Revolution. We may make the age of Queen Anne our special study, or get to know all about Johnson, Swift, Burke, and Goldsmith. The most fruitful reading is that which has a distinct aim, and which coheres round a fixed centre. The man who reads in this spirit makes himself a scholar, and when the initial distaste for method and system has been overcome, will experience a pleasure in his reading which the desultory reader never knows.

This also implies a certain strenuous patience, without which the best results of our reading will escape us. There is no wiser counsel on this point than that which is given by Robertson of Brighton. He is speaking of the advantages of steady reading, and says: "In Oxford four years are spent in preparing about fourteen books only for examination; but this is only a partial representation of the matter, for these fourteen books have been the subject of school work for years. These are made text-books, read, re-read, digested, worked, got up, until they become part and parcel of the mind: about four histories, three or four philosophical works, four poets, and two or three miscellaneous works. These are the choice works of two languages, and whosoever has mastered them is a scholar indeed." He then goes on to say that if such a work as Southey's *Peninsular War* were to be read after the Oxford fashion, it would take six months with the pen in

hand, "getting up the details of policy, battles, laws, geography, etc." As to his own habits of reading, he calculates that one book, a small 8vo *Manual of Chemistry*, will take him six months; but he adds, that when he has finished it, he will be able to "bear an examination on every law and principle it lays down." Harriet Martineau often took an hour to read a page; and Auguste Comte—"one of the most profound thinkers in Europe," has read an incredibly small number of books these last twenty years, and scarcely ever a review. Finally, he says, and it is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that "multifarious reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing. I read hard or not at all—never skimming, never turning aside to merely inviting books; and Plato, Aristotle, Butler, Thucydides, Sterne, Jonathan Edwards have passed like the iron atoms of the blood, into my mental constitution."

The whole science of reading, then, lies not so much in the art of reading many books, as of reading the best: not of reading widely, but reading well. A few great books, which we have made our own, are worth far more to us than the widest desultory reading. I conclude, therefore, where I began, by observing that the greatest books are now-a-days the cheapest, and that the ministry of books is a joy within the compass of the poorest, the crown of wisdom a reward within the reach and aspiration of the humblest.

THE PRICE OF PERFECTION

THE PRICE OF PERFECTION

THERE are few incidents in the Gospels that open a wider subject of debate than the story of the young ruler, and the best title for it, as most accurately describing its ethical significance, is the Price of Perfection. The youth comes running, says St. Mark, with a beautiful impulsiveness, and, kneeling at Christ's feet, asks a question which has long tormented him in secret: "What shall I do to obtain eternal life?" If he himself had not explained his own conduct and past life, we should instinctively think well of him for this act. We see at once that it is with a fresh and ardent nature we are dealing. We imagine him as a proud and sensitive youth, who has a contempt for all lowness of thought and unworthiness of conduct: one who shuns the crowd, and loves to nourish his soul with high thoughts and imaginations. There are really two desires which possess him: he wants to be perfect, and he wants to inherit eternal life. He has a devout temper, which is rare in youth, and an alluring sincerity, which is not rare, but is the finest charm of youth. Christ shows Himself deeply interested in this fresh young soul, for the elements of his character were precisely those

that would have made him an ideal disciple. All the greater grief was it to the Redeemer that on the final test he broke down, and dared not follow Him.

Now it is a great thing to conceive a really noble ambition, even if it be conceived imperfectly ; and this, at least, this youth has done. He wants to be perfect, as youths who love poetry want to be great poets, or as youths with a taste for art covet to be great artists. He sees that the crown of being lies in character. He has, no doubt, meditated on the great saints and heroes of his race, and the fire of a glorious emulation is alive in his heart. Moreover, he has seen the vision of perfection in Christ Himself. He is a ruler, a rich youth, and Christ is the son of a carpenter, and a person universally despised by the ruling classes, yet he kneels to Him and calls Him "Good Master." Whatever errors we may charge against him, we must needs admit that these are the signs of a real simplicity and sincerity of nature. The first step toward being anything noble is to see in what nobility really consists. It is much for the youth who would be a great poet or a great artist to know what great art and great poetry are, for nothing of high achievement is possible without that vision. Never mind if the goal is never reached : you will do nothing without the ambition, for it is the large ambitions of youth that feed the life of the world, and out of them is born all that makes human life glorious.

What, then, has this youth done to realize his

ideals? He replies that he has kept the commandments, and Christ accepts the statement. The fact that he was rich, no doubt, made many of the commandments easy to keep. For example, he had never been tempted to steal or covet: his circumstances shielded him. He had grown up in an atmosphere favourable to good conduct, and he spoke the truth when he said that he had never knowingly broken the law. Who knows the temptations of want save those who endure them? Wealth has its own peculiar seductions, but at least wealth saves a man from the jealousy that failure feels for success, from impassioned bitterness against the proud, from many a sore temptation to be not exactly truthful, because compromise means bread, to say nothing of the lack of bread that makes the thief, and often the murderer too. Let the youth who has never known want understand that the security of his lot provides a rare platform upon which the edifice of character may be built. You have shelter to grow ripe and leisure to grow wise. The very fact that bread is assured frees your faculties for higher pursuits than the mere drudgery of bread-winning. At all events, the temptations of the starving and miserable are not yours, since the very position which is yours carries with it social restraints which are favourable to the growth of the fine flower of spiritual culture and character. Let us say what we will of the peril of riches, yet the perils of poverty are manifoldly more dire, since the rich man has every incentive to keep

the law, and the poor man every temptation to break it.

Nor can it be reckoned as other than a great thing for a youth to be blameless as touching the things of the law. When Froude tells us that as touching the higher things of the law Carlyle was blameless, we almost forget the asperities of temper of which Froude takes such careful count, because we feel how rarely possible has such a boast been in literary biography. We are apt nowadays to over-emphasize the truth that bad men may become good men, and lost men may be reclaimed. We naturally cling to such a truth, because it is the gospel of all truths, the bell of hope that recalls us from our self-despairing. That is why the prodigal of Christ's great parable has been enshrined in the very heart of the world. But when all is said and done, it is surely a better thing to be what the elder brother was, and what this youth was, blameless in conscience, unsullied in honour, uncorrupted in nature, than as the prodigal. Faults these elder brothers have, but they are faults that spring from virtue, they are the vices of rectitude. To be a little hard and unsympathetic is after all a much less offence than to spend one's substance with harlots in riotous living. When the great temple of perfection is to be reared, beyond question the firmest foundation to be discovered is an unvitiated character, and a life that has ruled itself in strenuous righteousness. Therefore, I say, let the youth who would be perfect keep his youth unsullied. Let him

recollect that a clean record is a treasure far above rubies. Let him mark how Christ accepts this youth's statement about his past conduct, and loves him for it. Many maimed and sinful men came to Christ, but in this case He had the rare joy of meeting a soul that was disfigured by no stain of tolerated evil, a life that had honestly been lived according to the highest ideal of duty which it knew ; and Christ accepts these graces of character as the first elements and foundation of perfection.

What does Christ do to help him in his quest of perfection? He does two things. He first of all sends him back to the law of duty. The youth says, "I have kept the commandments." Christ replies, "Go on keeping them." The pathway of perfection is a beaten way : there is no royal road. Do the duty that lies nearest to you, and in doing it you will fit yourself for a yet higher. But that is not all. Christ shows him that perfection lies in no formal routine of obedience to law. The youth practically says that he has lived without deliberate sin ; we ask, "Is that possible?" Certainly it is possible, or the religion of conduct has no goal. We begin the perfect life by finding it easier to break the law than to keep it. But gradually, as old habits are overcome and old desires extinguished, we find that our life takes a new mould, and it actually becomes easier for us to keep the law than to break it. It follows that a man may so live as to commit no deliberate sin, and this is precisely what this youth professes to have done.

But by the way in which Christ treats him, He conveys to him a new sense of the imperfection of his present perfection. The better a man becomes, the more conscious should he be of his errors : the higher his ideal, the more keenly will he feel how far he is from realizing it. Thus the mark of the high calling is a receding goal ; the higher we go, the higher we want to go. That is what Christ wishes to impress on this youth, and He does so at last by putting him to a terrible test, under which he is broken. The youth thinks he is perfect, that he has reached the goal ; suddenly the goal recedes to an immeasurable distance, or, as Browning puts it,—

We do not see it, where it is
At the beginning of the race ;
As we proceed it shifts its place,
And where we looked for crowns to fall,
We find the tug's to come—that's all.

The youth lacks something, then : what is it ? It is that his view of perfection is limited and barren ; it is to add mechanically virtue to virtue, to withdraw farther and farther from the wicked in proud chastity of thought, to include every element of nobility in himself, until at last he is perfect. He does not recognise the infinitude of the thing he asks. The scale by which he measures things is inadequate ; his temper is too cool, his self-poise too complacently serene. There is no abandonment in his passion for perfection, no flinging himself away, no glorious folly, no splendid unreasonableness, and that is what is

wanted. One wave of this splendid, unreasoning passion for the impossible would have carried him nearer the goal than all his elaborate care to keep himself severely righteous ; and Christ touched the cardinal defect in his character when He told him to do a thing which was a noble folly indeed, and as such would have been laughed at by all the world, but through which he would have become perfect.

It is the passion for the impossible, if we will think of it, which lies at the root of all the noblest things done among men. To the high and separated souls of humanity there come sublime visions of a perfected social state out of which want and crime are forever purged : a perfected character in which all the baser elements are finally subdued and extirpated ; and resulting from them both a perfected world, not merely "lapped in universal law," but governed by universal love. It is easy to say, and to show ample cause why, these things cannot be ; but it is clear that not to have faith in them is simply to divest ourselves of all those potentialities which make for human progress. The passion for the impossible discovered the solar system and the new world ; created the consecrations of Francis of Assisi and St. Theresa ; inspired the great leaders of the Puritan revolt ; made Milton and all the great poets after him soar beyond the shadows, and discern how, in far futures they would never share, time should run back "and bring the age of gold." It kindled the patriotism of Mazzini, fed the purposes of

Livingstone, and in turn has been the master-force in the lives of all real statesmen, all true prophetic writers, all heroic reformers, whether of religious or of social life. Without this passion for the impossible we shall not touch the height of the practical and possible, for we shall never know how great they are. The noblest souls will always say,—

I will search for what never was found,
For the height and the light and the glow
Of impossible things I am bound,
For glory comes so.
If I miss them, at least there's a bliss
Which within me is silently wrought ;
I am better and nobler by this,
O Soul, that I sought.

But the fault of this youth was that he had never abandoned himself to any such high fanaticism. There was no blaze of passion in his soul. He was one of those who thought there was a way to make the best of both worlds, and he could not persuade himself that this world is well lost if we can indeed by its loss gain the other. That heroic persuasion has been the keynote in the greatness of the greatest men ; but he was not among them. That was his fatal defect—he had no passion for the impossible.

What, then, is the Test? What is the price of Perfection? Look at this youth again. Self-complacent as his statement sounds, yet there is nothing priggish in him. Had it been the mere empty vaunting of a conceited Pharisaic soul we may be quite

sure that Christ would have spoken differently. But as Christ looks into the secret of his nature, He sees the hidden fault and discloses it. It is not that he is proud of his virtue, but he is proud of his position. It is not that he loves money, but he has a very natural sense of the advantages of wealth. His wealth, as we have seen, has been a safeguard from coarse and vulgar temptations ; it has afforded him time for philosophic thought, leisure for religious growth. We begin to discern a touch of the dilet-tante in him. He loves a luxurious seclusion, the feeling of being able to live his own life, apart from ignoble cares. He has chosen the very highest pursuit for his seclusion, the pursuit of piety ; but piety may be luxurious in its tastes as well as vice. Christ suddenly confronts him with a terrible command : " Sell all that thou hast, and follow Me." He says to him, in effect, " The best way of attaining perfection is not in this sumptuous seclusion, it is not in wealth ; it is in a life like Mine, poor, laborious, and unsheltered." Christ does not condemn the mere possession of riches ; He does not hint that this youth is mean, or money-loving, or anything of the kind ; He simply says that His own way of life leads most directly to perfection. The youth asks, " How am I to gain what I want ? " Christ replies, " Since you *will* know, by taking My yoke upon you, and following Me." Before that reply the youth trembled, and his heart failed him ; he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

The temptation to the dilettante spirit is a very common one. Who has not thought, "How much better I could be if I had not to endure the humiliations of poverty! What poems I could write, what books I could produce, what pictures I could paint, if I were wealthy—if I could work as I pleased, and if the yoke of this hurried, anxious drudgery for bread were removed!" And of course there is some truth in the plea. Poets have died for lack of bread, and artists have wasted their genius for lack of money. We have admitted that it is probably easier to keep the commandments as a wealthy man than as a beggar. But perfection is a spirit, a temper, and a mould of thought; what if it be true that for the proper and highest expression of this spirit, poverty is necessary? What if it be true that the rarest steel of genius, which smites to the dividing asunder of soul and marrow, has usually taken its temper from the icy brook of poverty, wherein it was plunged? What if the true philosophy of perfection be that—

Life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom
To shape and use?

Rogers was a rich man and a small poet; Burns was a poor man and a great poet. Had the difference of condition anything to do with it? Have not the saints usually been poor? Did not Buddha

renounce his palace as the primary condition of saving his fellows? And, after all, are the rich so much more perfect in life than the poor, that the noblest examples of moral perfection have been oftener found in the palace than the cottage? We know the inevitable answer, and our knowledge of that answer surely justifies Christ in making poverty and labour the prime conditions of the perfection which this youth covets.

But, however this may be, Christ makes two things clear, the first of which is that there can be no perfection without some renunciation. Something renounced is always something gained. We do not find perfection in doing our own will, however right that will may seem, but in obeying a higher will, however hard that will may seem. And the second thing which Christ teaches is, that he who professes a passion for eternal life must have enough faith in the unseen to sacrifice this life for it. "Thou shalt have treasure in heaven," says Christ; is not that enough? Alas, no: not when it means giving up such treasure as we have here; few men believe in heaven enough for that. What it really comes to is, that either we do not genuinely want perfection, or else we want it, but are not willing to pay the price. That is the plain truth of the story: it is to this that Christ reduces the noble aspirations of this youth by a single searching word. Perfection has its price, and in this case it is the voluntary acceptance of poverty. And behold, the price is too

great! It is too much to ask this rich and cultured youth to become like these penniless fishermen, and the Nazarene idealist they follow. And the worst of it is that he knows Christ is right, and that is why he went away sorrowful; it was with the sorrow of a soul that dared not follow its ideal.

The complaint which Tolstoi brings against Christians is that they do not believe that Christ meant what He said. Because Christ often spoke in parables, they try to treat His whole teaching as parabolic, and in order to defend their own imperfect embodiment of Christianity they are driven to minimise the force of Christ's most outspoken words. Let us be honest, then, for once. In this case Christ means exactly what He says, and no attenuation of His words is possible. He says that if this youth has an extraordinary ambition, he must be prepared to pay an extraordinary price for it; if he would be perfect, he must be poor. It does not follow that every man who would be perfect must take vows of poverty, but unquestionably in very many cases this is still the price. A man may be a good enough man and keep his wealth, but if he would be perfect he must give it away. It is not a part or a tithe,—so much this youth had already given,—it is all, everything; and then is gained that added touch of character which makes perfection. In the view of this youth, perfection is worth a good deal, but it is not worth this. In the view of Christ it is worth everything. What worth do you put on

it? If you really want it, you will not haggle over the price. It is a hard saying of Christ's, and few there be who can receive it ; but when a man obeys it in sincerity of heart, when he becomes a fool for Christ's sake, when he goes to the New Hebrides as Paton did, or leaves the University to live in the slums, as many to-day are doing, then he can cry,—

Renounce joy for a fellow's sake,
That's joy beyond joy.

No man can give up so much to be a Christian as he gives up by not being one, and renunciation such as this is beatitude.

THE RELIGION OF A YOUNG MAN

THE RELIGION OF A YOUNG MAN ;

WITH WORDS BY THE WAY TO OLDER MEN.

THE Master Builder, in Ibsen's famous play, confesses to an over-mastering fear ; he fears the young. Some day he foresees that the new generation will come knocking at the door, and the event terrifies him. There is very much the same sort of feeling among many people who esteem themselves the exponents and custodians of religion. Nothing occasions them so much dread as the working of the modern spirit. They cannot comprehend that "God fulfils Himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the world." They do not confess their terror in the same way as the Master Builder does ; but if their condition of mind were analyzed, it would be found identical with his : they fear the young.

Now what is there in the religious demands of the young that is novel, or is there anything to occasion legitimate fear ? To answer the second question first : no man who believes in the real progress of the race ought to fear the young. Lack of faith in the young is simply lack of faith in human progress. Whatever work the aged have initiated for their generation, it is for the new generation to fulfil. There is at once a pathetic and profound truth in

the saying of St. Paul, when he closes his great list of Hebrew worthies who received not the promise, by declaring that they received it not because without us they could not be made perfect. They had to wait for us. All that they did was an instalment. They did their own work with an entire belief in its finality, as a mason might who works upon one section of a great cathedral, but who does not see what is going on in other sections, and does not know the full plan which he is helping to complete. In cathedral building generations pass, and times change, but the work goes on. The twelfth century lays the foundation stone, and the sixteenth completes the spire : and the variation of thought between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries is reflected in the architecture. The same law works in human life. We may reasonably expect that our children will not wholly resemble us, since we ourselves differ from our ancestors. In religion, as in art, the type is perpetually altering with the generations. If it were not so the world would stagnate, and there would be no progress. And, therefore, I repeat, that to fear the new generation is simply to disbelieve in human progress. It is pessimism of the worst and most disastrous kind.

But what is there in the new type in religion which is novel ? Can we at all discern its variation ?

From a book which has attracted very wide and deserved attention—*The Heavenly Twins*, by Sarah Grand, I extract this significant passage :—

“Adeline has always been of a deeply religious

disposition ; but it was not bound to be, and it was never likely to be, the religion of any church which would secure her lasting reverence."

" 'I wonder what the religion of the future will be ? ' Mr. Kilroy remarked.

" 'It will consist in the deepest reverence for moral worth, the tenderest pity for the frailties of human nature, the most profound faith in its final perfectibility,' Ideala answered. 'The religion of the future will be a thing about which there can be no doubt, and consequently no dispute. It is in the infinite truths, known to Buddha, repeated by Plato, preached by Christ, undoubted, undisputed even by the spirit of evil, that religion must consist. . . . The religion of the future will neither be a political institution, nor a means of livelihood, but an expression of the highest moral attribute—human or divine—disinterested love.' "

This definition is perhaps a little cloudy and indefinite, but it certainly sums up a good deal of what the more thoughtful minds among the young are thinking. And one or two things are specially notable about it. Not a word is said about dogmas ; it is truths that are discussed. There is no choice offered in church organizations—they are simply dropped out of sight. The Church itself may be said to have dropped out of sight also—it is Christ and truth on which the eye fixes itself. The two most clearly defined articles of faith are reverence for moral worth, and belief in the perfectibility of

human nature. The one weapon by which these ideas are to be realized is disinterested love.

Now I do not mean to say that this passage is either a fair or complete summing-up of what the young man wants in religion, but I regard it as a potent indication. "Moral worth": what does that mean? It means character. The young are especially intolerant of shams, they have the keenest eye to detect the discrepancy between belief and practice. They ask above all for "sacred reality." The men who move them are not the rhetoricians—though in youth the appetite for oratory is unstinted—but the men of character, of vehement sincerity, of moral worth. Youth will not tolerate mere pulpit platitudes. It utterly refuses to respect the clergyman simply because he is a clergyman. The democratic spirit which has passed over the nation has taught the most inexperienced of us to discern keenly the calibre and worth of manhood wherever it is found. We are not imposed upon in our day by titles and words. We discuss the actions of royalty with as much freedom as we should advert upon the shortcomings of our buttermilk. It is not to be expected that we should be any less outspoken in our criticism of the Church. There are churches which would never admit Jesus Christ to their membership. There are Christians who are no whit better than the Scribes and Pharisees whom Christ denounced. There are forms of worship which are popular for the same, and no higher reasons,

that theatres and concerts are popular. There are congregations and preachers who, after a lifetime of talk about Christianity, have not even the glimmering of a conception of what Christianity really means, and in the spirit of their thought and life are more Pagan than the Pagan governor who condemned Christ to the cross. Therefore youth has learned to discriminate sharply between Christ and the Church. It can adore Christ, yet at the same time be hostile to the Church—that is, the Pagan Church—which parodies His name. It demands truth, reality, sincerity, and it will be content with nothing else.

I have received hundreds of letters from youths, the whole drift of which is that they are discontented with the religious forms they see, and want a more real religion if they are to believe in religion. I rejoice in their discontent. It is a divine discontent, "a large and liberal discontent," as William Watson puts it, out of which heroes, reformers, and martyrs may grow. The only man beyond hope of salvation is he who is contented with the world as it is. If any finer forms of Christian life are to appear in the twentieth century, it is from these ardent idealists of the nineteenth century we must expect them. If Luther had never been enraged at the corruptions of Romanism, there would have been no Reformation; and if Wesley could have been contented with the sleek formalism of the Church of England, we should have had no Methodism. This torturing fire which burns in youth is a divine flame by which the world

is to be purified. It becomes the Church to give no offence to those who are not far from the kingdom of God. If the Church wants youth, it must have reality; it must be free from formalism, servility, cowardice, compromise, half-heartedness. Religion must be of a thoroughly manly, earnest, practical, and straightforward type. Wherever there is a church of this order, and a minister who understands these aspirations of youth, there is no difficulty in getting young men. The difficulty is how to keep them out.

For my own part, I may confidently state that I have never known a manly ministry which has failed to touch young men. Of course I take for granted that the preacher had not merely manly characteristics, but some real ability for pulpit utterance. Youth is very intolerant of bungled work. Young men really like being preached to—but not by a fool. They know at once whether the preacher has been through the fire, and has touched the realities of life with his own hands, and has trodden for himself the path of temptation they know so well. They appreciate oratory more than any other class of society; but it is the strong words of a strong man which alone will draw them. If I look round a church five minutes before the preacher appears, I can accurately grasp the character of the preacher by his congregation. If I see only old men, I know what to expect. Where there are only old men one may safely conclude that formalism and an unsoftened orthodoxy prevail. Where three-fourths

of the congregation consists of young men, you may be equally sure that a strong, invigorating, ethical Gospel is being preached. "Show me how to live," is the cry of the young man; "don't talk to me about heaven, but about earth; tell me what I am to do with this evil flesh, this solicitous devil, this seductive world; give me brotherhood, comradeship, practical aid; don't say, 'Be good,' but show me how to be good, where I am to get instant, unfailing help toward goodness; how I am to act amid the accepted hypocrisies of business, the palliated lies of trade, the defiling impulses of a young man's lonely hours; speak to me in plain words, whip me as you will, shame and humble me if you can; for all I will be thankful, and will take you for my prophet, my master, my conscience, if you can but make clear your power to govern me!" Wherever there is a minister who proves himself able to meet that demand, there will be no lack of young men in his church. He will speak with authority, and not as the scribes.

Reality, sacred reality—that sums up, then, the dominant element in a young man's religion. He is quick to catch at once the perfunctory note in the preacher's voice. He asks, What is the good of the Church? when he finds that the constant preaching of self-sacrifice has not created better men and women in the Church than outside it. He tries everything by the touchstone of the practical. He says: "Here am I, a young man, lonely in a great

city, living in uncomfortable rooms, the devil always at my ear, the music-hall and the bar-room always ready to welcome me, the comrade never far away who is eager to make me sharer of his pleasant vices. Here am I, finding right so difficult and wrong so easy. What can you do for me?"

It is to be feared that the majority of churches have given no heed to this appeal. They invite the youth to a prayer meeting, where the same people offer the same prayers every week, or to a debating society, where prim young persons read juvenile essays on "Which is the greatest power: the sword or the pen?" etc. The church is opened once or twice a week; the bar-room and music-hall are opened every night. The homes of church-goers are almost never opened to the lonely, unfriended youth. Then he begins to drift. He wants to be good, but his social instincts are too strong for him. You see, vice is so much more social than virtue; there is no lack of comradeship in the way of the ungodly. Then, perhaps, he finds that his master, who is a pillar of the church, is not above a dirty trick in business. He sees John Smith in church on Sunday, singing with vigorous unction, and he remembers that John Smith swore at him last week, and has cultivated to perfection some of the qualities of the "Heathen Chinee." He hears sermon after sermon about heaven, but never a word about tricks of trade, social duties, humanitarian service. He begins to think he can get on just as well without

sermons as with them. It occurs to him that it will do him a great deal more good to take a long spin on his bicycle than to spend his Sunday in a pew ; or perhaps the temptation comes in another way, and some one gives him a cheap infidel tract, after reading which he feels so abnormally clever that henceforth he can only regard with pitying contempt the man who preaches for a living. I am not defending such a youth. I am describing him. I know perfectly well that he is shallow, presumptuous, and woefully wrong in his conclusions. But that is not the point ; the point is how to guard him against such conclusions. Give him a real church, which is a true social centre ; regard his loneliness, and open the Christian home to him ; encourage him in his intellectual aims ; make the church at once his club, his college, and his sanctuary ; don't press him too hard with your middle-aged view of pleasure, but encourage him in all innocent amusements ; keep him from the music-hall by giving him good music in the church ; wean him from poor and debasing pleasures by affording him the chance of better ones ; teach him that religion is joy, and the Christian man an incomparably happier and nobler man than the unchristian ; set him to some practical work in the service of humanity which will make him feel that he is of use to the church, and that the church is of use to the world—do these things, and there is no one readier to respond to the authority of Christ than the young man. It is

the sourness and narrowness of professional piety that so discourage the young ; it is its feebleness and insincerity which alienate them .

So far, then, as I can measure the religious ideals of youth, this is how I should describe them :—A reasonable theology which ignores nothing that is true in science and observation ; respect for creeds giving way to respect for conduct ; a church organised on the widest democratic base, and mobilised for the widest social service ; a ministry that is real, earnest, and transparently sincere ; a Christianity of broader horizons, coming out of its vestries and pews into the common market-places of human life, and making an honest attempt to apply the ethics of Jesus to the entire area of public and private life.

I have spoken, so far, on behalf of youth, but now it is only fair that I should speak to it. If the elders often fail to measure rightly the spirit of youth, youth is also apt to be unfair to the elders. There is a touch of hardness and intolerance in all youth. It is a harsh judge. It lays itself open to the sarcasm that " none of us is infallible, not even the youngest of us." For it is the young who always speak with the serenest accent of infallibility. When men reach middle life or old age, and have found out how little the wisest knows and the strongest does, how often the clearest logic leads to the wildest conclusions, and how much has to be allowed for the infirmities of human nature in all schemes for its uplifting and progress, they are not so sure, and they become

readier to forgive than to rebuke. They are thankful for small gains, and without losing the ideals of youth learn not to expect too much from human nature. But the time men reach middle life they have ceased to expect perfect men and women: they are content if they find good ones.

Shelley is as good an example as we could find of this intolerance of youth. He never had the opportunity of seeing a real Christianity or meeting a true Christian. He recognised the divine height of the Christian ideal, but he nowhere found any human creature who approximated to it. The only Christianity he ever met was a base caricature of the spirit and temper of Jesus. He made no effort to discover whether or no there was any truer Christianity than that which he saw and scorned. If he had approached Christianity in a scientific spirit, he would have said: "Before I renounce Christianity I will see if I can find a true Christian; I will make an exhaustive examination of all forms of so-called Christian life, that I may know whether its theory of regeneration has any evidence in fact or no." If he had made such a search, he would have found among the Quakers and the early Methodists—to mention no others—abundant evidence of the mystery of spiritual transformation which works in Christianity.

But that was not the temper of Shelley, and it is not the temper of youth. Shelley rushed with fiery ardour upon the conclusion that because he had met

in his narrow seventeen years only a spurious Christianity, therefore there was none real. He thereupon denounces Christianity. He challenges the University of Oxford to prove to him that there is a God. He wants absolute proof of everything. He will allow no more margin for mystery in the scheme of things than for radical imperfections in human nature. He flies in the face of all authority, and believes himself a martyr when authority retaliates. With shrill voice and hectic colour, and almost maniacal vehemence, he shrieks his defiance against all the powers that be. In later life he writes an essay in praise of Christianity, for the years had taught him how much youth has to unlearn before it can begin to learn. But how typical of youth is all this! How well does it illustrate that hot intolerance of temper which rejects qualifications as compromises, and arrives at tremendous conclusions upon the hastiest generalizations.

Now I am far from recommending compromise, but I think I may inculcate the duty of reasonableness. For example, while admitting the disastrous discrepancy between faith and practice among Christians, it seems to me an altogether unreasonable thing to permit the defects of persons or churches to alienate us from the pursuit of religion, or drive us to the conclusion that Christianity is not true. Suppose I were to show a man half a dozen copies of some great picture of Raphael's or Titian's, all more or less imperfect, would it be reasonable for him to

say, "These copies are so execrable that I want to hear no more about Raphael and Titian, and from this hour I have no desire to see their masterpieces"? Would it not be still more unreasonable if he added, "Raphael must have been a very bad painter, or there wouldn't have been so many bad copies of his pictures in the world"? Yet that is the spirit in which a young man really criticises Christianity, when he refuses to follow Christ because he knows many persons who do so imperfectly. Let us admit that the world is full of bad copies of Christ; is not that at least a proof of something supreme in Christ which makes so many people desirous of copying Him? Bad as the copy is, it is the evidence of an aspiration in every way noble in itself, however imperfect its fulfilment. And, moreover, the copies are not all bad. No doubt there are Chadbands in the Church, but there have also been Augustines and Wesleys. The minister who cares more for praise than duty, the church official who is spiteful, narrow, and parsimonious, the church-member who cheats and lies, and for a pretence makes long prayers, are not extinct types, but at all events they are not common types. In every church there are those who are the salt of the earth; and even Carlyle, than whom no man had less love of churches, could acknowledge as he drew near to the end of life: "As to the people I see, the best class of all are the religious people. It teaches me again that the best of this class is the best that one will find in any

class whatsoever." But even if this were not so, we ought still in justice to remember that Christianity is not Christ. The very badness of the copy should make us all the more anxious to understand the Divine original ; and however little we may believe in clergy and churches, we are not released from the obligation of believing in Christ.

Another conclusion at which young men often arrive, and which arises from the same hastiness of generalization, is that it is possible to live as good a life without Christianity as with it, and this also is an unreasonable conclusion. I do not deny—I admit with thankfulness—that it is quite possible to point to those who have rejected Christianity, and yet have lived, and are living, pure and high lives. But that proves nothing, because these very lives are the indirect fruit of Christianity. George Eliot was bred in a religion as emotional as General Booth's ; John Morley breathed as a child the air of the simplest evangelicalism. 'Do you suppose that an absolute unbeliever could ever have written those heart-moving descriptions of Dinah Morris preaching on the village green ; or that a life so strenuously high-minded as John Morley's could ever have sprung altogether out of the sterile soil of denial ? The fact is, the very saints of scepticism are the unmistakable children of Christianity. They could not help themselves. They have breathed an air that is saturated with the Christian sentiment of centuries, they have read a literature which is veined through and through with

Christian convictions. A man cannot read his Shakespeare or Milton, his Burke or Scott, or Wordsworth, or Browning, or Tennyson, without absorbing the finest essences of Christianity at every pore. The agnostic lives a high and noble life not by virtue of his agnosticism, but in spite of it. And a man like John Morley is the legitimate product of Christianity in all his finer qualities as truly as St. Paul or Wesley, Xavier or Livingstone themselves.

If we would prove that men can lead as noble lives without Christianity as with it, we must make our comparison with some nation that has never heard of Christ: you cannot make it in a land where the unconscious influence of Christianity shapes all public life and thought, and is the silent force which lies behind all other forces that move and mould the nation. In order to understand what Christianity really means, we must picture to ourselves what its withdrawal would imply; what would happen to London, to England, to the world, if to-morrow the great organization of the Christian Churches were broken up, if the Gospels were a lost book, if the crowd of altruistic workers who toil for no reward or glory, but only for Christ's sake, were disbanded, if not merely the story of Jesus were forgotten, but all the slow effort of the world through two thousand years to interpret and apply His ideas were obliterated and forgotten too. Until we have measured with some discernment and approach to accuracy what this would mean, it is equally unin-

telligent and unreasonable to claim that men can live as good lives without Christianity as with it ; nor are the obvious defects of those who profess and call themselves Christians any justification for the rejection of Christianity.

Again, religion implies a belief in the supernatural, and perhaps the main difficulty which a young man has in accepting Christianity, and the real source of his resentment against theological terms which rest on a belief in the supernatural, is the passion of youth for the concrete, and its inability to appreciate the abstract. But why is it difficult to believe in the supernatural? Tennyson did not find it difficult, when he said that to him "death was an almost laughable impossibility, and the extinction of personality (if so it were) the only true life." But this was the brooding and sensitive imagination of a poet unfamiliar with the hard facts of science! Let it be so, though it is well known that no man took a more thorough interest in science than Tennyson, or was more familiar with its teachings. Let us hear a different man, whose whole life has been passed in the closest scrutiny of natural phenomena. This is what Edison, the greatest scientific discoverer of our time, has to say: "No person can be brought into close contact with the mysteries of nature, or make a study of chemistry, without being convinced that behind it all there is supreme intelligence. I am convinced of that, and I think that I could—perhaps I may some time—demonstrate the existence of such

intelligence through the operation of those mysterious laws with the certainty of a demonstration in mathematics."

It is, indeed, practically useless to talk of religion at all unless we admit what we call the supernatural, for the existence of God is the foundation of all religion, and is also the key to all supernaturalism. If God exists, there is no improbability in the incarnation, or the existence of angels, or the future state of man, and of his continued service in "the wageless work of Paradise." To be sure of God is to be sure of everything, and we may as well face the plain alternative of materialism without God, or God and supernaturalism. And in such a stupendous crisis we do well to listen to the voices of the greatest and wisest. There are many youths who have just read enough anti-religious literature to make them doubt the reality of religious truth, but not enough to reveal to them the emptiness and irrationality of atheism. A youth told me the other day that he preferred spending his Sabbath with his hammer among the rocks to spending it in church, because there were no debatable revelations in geology! Why, in all the sermons I may preach in a month there would not be half so many debatable things as geology can present in an hour. This is mere ignorance, the ignorance and pride of that little knowledge which is a dangerous thing. And for that reason get more knowledge. The little knowledge may bring bewilderment, but the little more often takes

us out of the storm-zone into the far-radiating light. Edison himself is a conspicuous example of this ; and if only those, who, out of a knowledge far inferior to his, deride supernaturalism, would go a little deeper, they would grasp the clue as he has done, and find that beyond all we see there is the undeniable evidence of the unseen.

Finally, I claim that a young man must have a religion, and cannot live without religion, if he is to live worthily. If I were called upon to express in a sentence what it is that differentiates man from all other living creatures, I should reply that man is the only creature on the face of the earth who, in any real and supreme fashion, can adapt means to an end. So far as man's earthly activities are concerned it is easy to perceive the truth of such a statement. The bird builds its nest to-day as it did in the days of Cæsar, but man is an architect who covers the earth with temples and cathedrals, and is for ever adapting his increasing knowledge to new uses. The leviathan plunges through the deep to-day as he did when Job described him ; but man has launched upon the deep a far vaster leviathan, moving with a yet mightier speed, and annihilating oceans as it goes. This is the adaptation of means to an end, the work of an intellect which sees the uses of things and handles them with sovereign mastery. But man possesses yet nobler means that suggest a yet higher end. He measures himself against the infinite, and asks how he is to adapt himself to *that* ? He is

aware of thoughts and powers within him, which carry him far beyond the poor circumference of the life he now lives. He is a creature who craves a God.

To feel this is to acknowledge the need for a religion. Religion is the moral sense in man attempting to adapt means to an end, spiritual means to a spiritual end, and thus to spell out the method by which the soul justifies itself. This is the essence of religion, and it is the sublimest characteristic of man that he is, and cannot but be, a religious creature. And surely it is both pathetic and significant, and should do much to help us in our quest of truth, to recollect that Carlyle, who passed through every phase of doubt that we are likely to encounter, said at last that the older he became the more clearly he saw the beauty and completeness of that reply to the eternal wherefore of man's existence which he learned from his Scotch catechism as a boy: "What is the chief end of man? It is to know God and enjoy Him for ever."

For us Christ is the one Master and His truth the one religion worth allegiance. For the serious man Christianity can never be a negligible quantity, because, whether true or false, it has certainly shaped the thoughts and the convictions of the world for eighteen hundred years. Nor is it possible to dismiss the sayings and history of Jesus as literature; they are much more than fine literature; they constitute the prime intellectual and moral force of the modern world. The gospels can never be ranked

with Plato and Shakespeare: Plato and Shakespeare are not read by millions in public worship week by week, and do not furnish the greatest nations with a law of life and a pattern of conduct. The history of Jesus has indelibly stamped itself upon the imagination of the world. It has created the noblest art and architecture; it has woven itself into the music and literature of all civilized nations; it has coloured the thought and shaped the action of the best men for many centuries. We may think what we will of Jesus, but think we must. As men of merely ordinary intelligence, some verdict on Christianity is demanded of us by the fact that we are born into a community where the New Testament is circulated, and Christian worship is a custom.

But, still further, before a young man of any seriousness of thought can reject Christianity, it becomes him to ask the simple and solemn question, *Suppose it is true?* Clearly, if it be true, it alters the entire aspect of life and death for us. We cannot escape the conclusion, that if Christ was what He said He was; if He, who must at least be admitted to have been the greatest spiritual expert who ever spoke to the souls of men, did utter only solemn and indubitable truth, when He taught the great doctrines of a divine origin, a divine judgment, and a vast hereafter for every man,—then for us what He taught is the one and only subject of supreme importance in the universe. “I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly.” Suppose that is true?

"I am the resurrection and the life : whoso believeth in Me shall never die." Suppose that is true? It may not be : but suppose it is? It may be possible to find a meaning for these words which robs them of all real significance : but suppose we cannot? And are they not rendered still more impressive, when we recollect that millions have believed these statements, and have died with a serene confidence in their truth, and that for long ages the nations of Europe have gone on repeating, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting"? To flippantly disregard Christianity in the face of such considerations as these is not the act of any man of common intelligence. We must record our verdict on Christianity ; we are bound by every compulsion of moral or intellectual sincerity to do so. We are bound to think of Christ, because the evidences of His power meet our gaze at every turn, and His name salutes us with every breath we draw. I have no space to argue out the whole case for Christianity, but I am content to suggest, what to every thinking man must needs be a great and even appalling consideration,—*Suppose it is true?*

But it is impossible to stop with that question. There are others which I must needs ask also. Do you believe in social justice? Do you believe in all that is implied by the rights of man, the just and natural rights of man, as God meant him to possess them in unthreatened liberty and unquestioned confidence? This was the doctrine of Christ.

It was this evangel of social justice which was carried across Europe by the great spiritual revolutionists of Christianity, and it changed the world. Ought not you, then, who seek justice for all men, to be the first to stand upon the side of this great Teacher, out of whose words have been wrought the immense changes which have brought liberty and justice to the whole human race?

Or, do you believe in social service? We call it by a hard word to-day—altruism—and men repeat the word with an air of originality, as though it were a discovery of the last decades of the nineteenth century. Christ discovered it, and, what is more, lived it, long ago. He taught all that it means in the story of the Good Samaritan, and summed it all up in the words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Nay, more; the struggle for the life of others, as Professor Drummond has felicitously described it in his last book, has gone on from the earliest ages of the world, and is as plain a fact as the struggle for existence. Christ gave it its most lucid definition and its highest sanction by His words and life: ought not you therefore to be proud to call yourself a Christian?

Or, do you array before your mind great civic ideals, and encourage in your life a noble civic passion? Do you desire to see a perfect society, freed alike from the avarice of wealth and the plague of poverty, based upon simplicity, lived in brotherliness, directed toward the highest good of the greatest

number? That also was the ideal of Christ, and He described it as the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and taught us to pray day by day, "Thy kingdom come." If you feel these things, it follows that by every instinct of justice, by every movement of compassion, by every noble ideal of social service or reforming statesmanship, you are already on the side of Christ, and he who is not against Christ is for Him.

In these pages I have touched on many questions, but there is really only one question of the day, only one question of the ages: it is, "*What think ye of Christ?*" Among the many sights in Rome that astonished and moved my mind, there was one which made an indelible impression. Close to the ancient Capitol there was once a school, and eighteen hundred years ago two boys sat in this school. One of them was suspected of Christianity, and the other, with something of a schoolboy's humorous malice, drew upon the wall the rough sketch of a Cross, and a man upon it with an ass's head. Underneath it he wrote the name of his school-fellow: "*Alexamenos worships Christ.*" That is what a schoolboy of Imperial Rome thought of Christ, and Rome has passed away with all her glory, and still there lives upon the plaster that rude sketch, drawn by that schoolboy of all these centuries ago. Who could have supposed that when so much perished so slight a thing should have survived? Who could have imagined that this derisive schoolboy verdict on Christ

should remain, when Capitol and Forum, and all the legions, and eagles, and banners of an empire had been swept away? Yet so it is. And so it will be with us. All our life, with all its stately structure of hopes and gains, energies and ambitions, achievements and successes will pass away, but what we think of Christ will remain. It will prove itself to be the one truly important and imperishable thing in our life, because the greatest of all questions must always be the question of religion.

To be a Christian is the highest of all human achievements, and Christianity is, in a very true sense, a young man's religion. We sometimes forget that Jesus Christ was a young man; that all the marvellous record of His ministry was accomplished within the limits of a life that never passed out of youth; and that for the most part His apostles and disciples, who spread the new faith which has changed the world, were also young men. If the world of our day is to be saved, it must be by young men. The call to "leave all and follow Me" is meant for the ear of youth; it beats on that ear with the clearest insistence; it moves the soul of youth with the quickest magic. I have very little doubt that the crusaders were mostly young men. It is certain that the great evangelical revival under Wesley and Whitefield was the work of young men, and that the Salvation Army is to-day captained by youth. This age has shown itself memorably kind to youth, for at this moment the best known

writers, social leaders, and captains of humanity are young men. I can propose no higher ambition, I can suggest no nobler scheme of life to any young man who may read these pages, than that he should seek to follow the example and be true to the spirit of that Divine Youth, who at thirty-three hung victorious on the Cross, having finished the work that God had given Him to do.

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